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Costly dispute

What the Strait of Hormuz closure costs the Arab side

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S. American tragedy

At least 77 killed in Colombia earthquake

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Israel Festival

Aner Shapiro's creative legacy inspires hackathon

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RESIDENTS DIG through the debris of a collapsed building after an earthquake in Cali, Colombia, yesterday. (Juan Pablo Arbelaez/Reuters)

ISRAELI TOURIST IN COLOMBIA TELLS 'POST'

Quake reminded me of sirens in Israel

INTERVIEW

• By MATHILDA HELLER

"It reminded me of Israel with the sirens and the bombs," Israeli resident Fernando Chaim Bisker told *The Jerusalem Post* from Bogotá.

An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.4 shook Colombia's coastal Choco province at 7:34 a.m. on Monday, kill-

ing at least 21 people and trapping an unknown number of people underneath rubble. According to the geological service, the quake struck at a depth of 79 km. with its epicenter near San Jose del Palmar.

Bisker, his wife Chaya, and their two children were in Cali for Shabbat and to see the inauguration of the new

president, before returning to Bogotá to continue their vacation on Sunday.

Bisker said they are safe as the building is new and is built to be protected in case of an earthquake.

Nevertheless, the tremors were frightening.

"I was having my breakfast after Shacharit [morning prayers], and then we noticed

it was shaking stronger and stronger. And I always saw it in the movies, not in my life. And we went down to the street, and we needed to hold on to the walls because we could not walk; it was shaking so much."

Down in the street, he said he could see all the buildings

See QUAKE, Page 7

Court rejects Likud MK's challenge over primary vote rule

Judge nevertheless finds party tribunal overstepped on key issue

• By SARAH BEN-NUN

Tel Aviv District Court on Monday rejected Likud MK Afif Abed's attempt to restore a narrowly approved change allowing current and former MKs, ministers and deputy ministers to run in the party's district primaries, leaving the restrictions in place ahead of the August 17 party vote.

Judge Yaakov Shaked nevertheless sided with Abed on a central issue in the dispute, ruling that the Likud's top internal court had exceeded its authority when it found that allowing incumbent politicians to compete in district races violated the party's principle of equality.

The lawsuit ultimately failed for a separate reason: Shaked declined to interfere with the party tribunal's finding that irregularities in the July 27 vote were serious enough to invalidate the result.

Shaked found that deciding whether MKs and ministers should be allowed to run in the

districts was a matter of party policy for Likud members themselves, not its judicial body. But he ruled that civil courts should generally refrain from second-guessing an internal party tribunal's assessment of problems in the conduct and counting of an election.

As a result, Abed's lawsuit and his request for temporary relief were both rejected. The court did not order either side to pay legal costs because Abed succeeded on the broader equality argument even though he lost the case over the voting irregularities.

The dispute stems from the way Likud constructs its Knesset list.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as party chairman, heads the slate. Likud members vote for candidates on the national list, while other positions are reserved for representatives of geographic districts and designated groups, alongside slots reserved for candidates chosen by the party chairman.

See LIKUD, Page 7

Hamas's waiting game buys group time as Israel stands firm

• By DANA BEN-SHIMON

Several Palestinian analysts affiliated with Hamas dismissed Israel's official rejection of the Board of Peace's recent 15-point Gaza plan, arguing that Israel will be compelled to accept the terms of the agreement due to American and international pressure.

They welcomed Hamas's public apparent commitment to move forward with the plan despite Israeli opposition to the proposal, which conditions withdrawal on the full disarmament of Hamas, and said Hamas's stance demonstrates that the Palestinian side is not the obstacle to progressing to the next phase of the agreement.

Fayez Abu Shamala, a Gaza-based prominent analyst associated with Hamas, described Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's public statement as "election rhetoric with no connection to reality."

"The enemy will be forced, against its wishes, to stop

See HAMAS, Page 7

While they secretly prepared for war, Mideast officials urged states to make deals with Israel

• By SHIR PERETS

Officials from one country in the Middle East advised another regional state to pursue an agreement with Israel to "lull it to sleep" while preparing for a larger confrontation, according to a Monday report.

First reported by KAN News and cleared for publication by the IDF military censor, the report noted that officials from said country told their counterparts during talks in recent months that they should demonstrate tactical

flexibility toward Israel and work toward reaching an agreement.

The proposal, however, was not intended as a path toward lasting reconciliation. Instead, the officials advised the other country to use the period created by an agreement to prepare for a future war against Israel, according to the sources cited in the report.

The officials reportedly suggested reaching an agreement with Israel with the intention of later violating it, while simultaneously pre-

paring for a larger military confrontation.

The identities of either of the two countries involved have not been identified.

"Anyone who thought we could entrust the security of our sons to agreements and guarantees from those around us received a painful slap in the face this morning," National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said in response to the report.

"Behind all these agreements rooted in the failed

See STATES, Page 7

First Likud reserved slot for businessman who called Trump 'morally corrupt'

• By KESHET NEEV and JAMES GENN

Likud announced on Monday that entrepreneur and businessman Oren Dobronsky, a co-founder of the tech company Hotbar who spent years working in Silicon Valley, would receive Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's first reserved slot on the party's Knesset list ahead of the elections.

In its announcement, the Likud said Dobronsky, whom the party described as right-wing, would be part of the "Likud team" and was expected after the elections to lead the development of AI in the economy, education, medicine, and other sectors.

Shortly after the announcement of his reserved slot, it emerged that Dobronsky had previously attacked US President

Donald Trump, calling him "a morally corrupt person" in a post on X/Twitter.

"Put aside for a moment the question of whether the agreement with Iran is good or bad," Dobronsky wrote in the post. "In what world is it normal not to invite to the negotiating table the ally that fought shoulder to shoulder with

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Bluth imposes West Bank ban on Dardik in place of house arrest

• By SARAH BEN-NUN and Jerusalem Post Staff

IDF Central Command chief Maj.-Gen. Avi Bluth on Monday replaced the full house arrest imposed on settler Tal Yinon Dardik with a ban from nearly all of the West Bank, following a Jeru-

salem District Court ruling that struck down where Dardik had been required to serve the house arrest but upheld the security justification for restricting him.

Under the revised conditions, Dardik will be barred from the West Bank except for Modi'in Illit, where he will be required to report to a police station twice a day, the military said. The order's original expiration date will remain unchanged.

The military said the

change followed Sunday's District Court decision, which upheld the security establishment's assessment that Dardik posed a significant danger and found that imposing administrative restrictions on him was justified, proportionate and reasonable.

The court nevertheless canceled the specific requirement that Dardik remain at his mother-in-law's home,

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TOP FORM

IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Eyal Zamir presents a gift to US Central Command commander Adm. Brad Cooper during an IDF operational forum meeting yesterday. (IDF)



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Who should be allowed to vote?

Public debate rages as some 70,000 Israeli citizens plan to return home to cast their ballots

• Jerusalem Post Staff

A row over Israelis living abroad who plan to return to vote in the October 27 election spilled into the open over the weekend.

It began with a Friday column by *Makor Rishon* editor-in-chief Kalman Libeskind, who argued that Israelis who have permanently moved abroad should think twice before flying back to help choose the country's next government.

His column came as Fly&Vote, an initiative of the AID Coalition, says 31,000 Israelis abroad have already registered with the project. The group hopes eventually to help bring as many as 70,000 voters to Israel for Election Day.

Most citizens cannot vote from abroad. Unless they fall into one of a small number of exceptions, they have to be physically in the country to cast a ballot.

Fly&Vote says it helps Israelis overseas check their eligibility and arrange travel. It says it does not ask participants which party they support.

Libeskind, who also hosts a daily radio show on KAN, wrote under the headline, "*Yordim* who intend to come to Israel to vote in the elections are brazen people."

The word "*yordim*" – literally "those who descend" – is commonly used for people who



leave the country and settle abroad.

Libeskind called the effort to bring such voters back an "immoral project."

"Whoever doesn't live here shouldn't decide how we live here," he wrote.

His argument was straightforward: people who have built permanent lives elsewhere will not live with the day-to-day consequences of the government they help elect, including its decisions on security, the economy, and military service.

He made a point of excluding Israelis who are abroad temporarily for work, studies, or

similar reasons. He also said his criticism was about principle, rather than law, and would apply whether the returning voters were expected to support the Right or the Left.

Reactions came quickly. Yesh Atid MK Vladimir Beliak accused Libeskind of applying a double standard and pointed to previous elections in which haredim (ultra-Orthodox) living abroad were encouraged to vote.

"What suddenly changed?" Beliak asked.

He argued that there had been far less outrage when overseas voters were thought likely to support haredi or

right-wing parties.

Beliak also said tens of thousands of haredim had returned from the United States in earlier elections. That figure has not been independently verified.

Democrats MK Naama Lazimi focused on another group: Israelis living abroad who returned after October 7 to serve in the reserves.

"For him, it's okay that they die for the country, but absolutely not that they vote here," Lazimi wrote.

Her response went to the heart of the criticism of Libeskind's column. Many Israelis who live abroad still serve in the IDF, have close family in

the country, pay taxes and own homes here, or remain deeply involved in Israeli life.

Democrats MK Gilad Kariv also criticized Libeskind, accusing him of hypocrisy and rejecting the idea that one commentator should decide who has earned the moral right to vote.

Eyal Naveh, a founder of Brothers and Sisters in Arms, pointed to the role Israelis abroad played in the weeks after October 7, including raising money, sending equipment, and returning to serve.

The argument also became personal inside KAN.

Europe correspondent Dov

Gil-Har challenged Libeskind publicly, noting that KAN had sent him abroad and that his daughter serves in the IDF.

Gil-Har wrote that he felt he had to return to Israel and vote, and asked Libeskind whether he believed someone in his situation should do so.

Libeskind answered that Gil-Har was exactly the kind of Israeli his column had excluded.

"My dear Dovi, it is recommended to first read the column and only then respond to it," he wrote, repeating that he was talking about those who had moved abroad permanently.

Journalist Yair Kraus later came to Libeskind's defense, saying critics had ignored that distinction.

The argument has caught fire partly because the numbers are large enough to matter.

Fly&Vote grew out of networks formed during the 2023 protests against the government's judicial overhaul. The AID Coalition says the project is nonpartisan and does not collect information about how participants intend to vote.

Its goal of bringing 70,000 Israelis back for Election Day has drawn attention in a race where relatively small shifts in turnout could influence the final distribution of Knesset seats.

That is why Libeskind's Friday column quickly swelled into something larger.

For his supporters, the issue is simple: people who permanently leave Israel should have less say over choices whose consequences will be carried mainly by those who still live here.

His critics say citizenship does not disappear at Ben-Gurion Airport, and neither do military service, family ties, or a sense of responsibility for the country.

With thousands of Israelis abroad now making plans to return for the October 27 vote, the argument is unlikely to end with a single column.

Former mayor of Beit Shemesh Aliza Bloch joins Erdan, Edelstein's right-wing party

• By NACHUM PERRY

Former mayor of Beit Shemesh Dr. Aliza Bloch announced on Monday that she is joining the new party established by Gilad Erdan and Yuli Edelstein and expressed her ambition to become the next education minister.

Bloch enters national politics following years of experience in management and education.

As mayor of Beit Shemesh, Bloch led one of Israel's most complex cities, home to secular, religious, haredi (ultra-Orthodox), and traditional communities.

During her term, she expanded the city's state haredi education frameworks, based on the belief that haredi children can maintain their identity while also receiving the tools needed to integrate into Israeli society through education, employment, and service.

"Beit Shemesh taught me that it is possible to bring different communities together, but only when people are prepared to truly work at it, not through headlines and not through bloc politics. Education is where we begin building belonging, responsibility, and a shared life," Bloch said in the past.

Bloch has also described the education system as central to addressing one of the most difficult issues facing Israeli society, equality in sharing the burden.

"Equality in sharing the burden does not begin at age 18 and is not built through legislation alone. It



FORMER BEIT SHEMESH mayor Aliza Bloch waves to supporters during the second round of municipal elections in Beit Shemesh, in 2024. (Jonathan Shaul/Flash90)

begins with education, a sense of belonging, and responsibility from a young age.

"I am not against the haredim. I am worried about politics that leaves an entire public outside Israeli responsibility. In Beit Shemesh, we proved that it is possible to create frameworks that respect haredi identity while also connecting children to the state, education, employment, and service."

Since the outbreak of the war, Bloch has spent part of each week living in Kiryat Shmona, where she

has worked to strengthen the education system in northern Israel.

As president of the Israel Arts and Science Academy, she initiated the establishment of centers of excellence for students in the city. She is currently working with the mayor of Netivot and the Education Ministry to establish a high school for gifted and outstanding students in science and the arts.

As the election approached, reports increasingly indicated that Bloch, considered to be a respected figure in both local and national

politics, was holding talks about joining one of the parties expected to run for the Knesset, with education at the top of her priorities.

In recent weeks, it emerged that she had held talks with Benny Gantz as well as with Likud, where she was reportedly offered a reserved spot on the party's next Knesset slate.

Bloch has now made her decision. She is the first person to join the new party established by former Likud members Gilad Erdan and Yuli Edelstein.

W. Bank nationalist crime jumps by 63% – report

• By SHOSHANA BAKER

There was a 63% increase in nationalist crime in the West Bank during the first half of 2026 compared to the same period in the previous year, according to the security establishment.

According to KAN, in total, some 660 incidents were recorded in the first half of 2026, up from 405 in the second half of 2025 and 440 in the first half of 2025.

The report also indicated that the number of deliberate attacks against security forces rose significantly, with 45 incidents reported in the first half of 2026, compared to 30 in the second half of 2025, marking a 50% increase in violence directed at security personnel.

The rise in violence was also reflected in the number of Palestinian casualties. During the first half of the year, 140 Palestinians were wounded and six were killed, compared with 82 wounded and no fatalities during the previous six months.

The figures mentioned do not account for incidents recorded in July. According to data from the security establishment, around 100 additional incidents of nationalist crime were reported in July alone, indicating that the upward trend persisted into the second half of 2026.

The data was released amid increasing public and international concern about the rise in violence in the West Bank.

Last month, the IDF increased its deployment across the West Bank to 26

battalions, adding two battalions amid the sharp escalation in Palestinian terrorist attacks and attacks from settlers.

The reinforcement followed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's order to increase troop deployments, additional checkpoints, and expanded counterterrorism operations.

Security forces arrested more than 70 terror suspects across the West Bank the day following the deadly shooting near Gilad Farm.

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander from Ohr Torah Stone commented on the recent uptick in West Bank violence on Monday following the Israel security establishment report's release.

"This violence committed by Jewish extremists is deeply disturbing and demands a clear moral response from Jewish and Israeli leadership. There is no justification, religious or otherwise, for attacking innocent people because of their identity," he stated.

"Such acts violate the most fundamental principles of Jewish law and undermine the values that should guide our society and democracy," he added.

"Jewish leaders, educators and rabbis have a responsibility to speak clearly and without hesitation. Condemning this violence is not about weakening Israel or ignoring the very real threats facing our country. It is about reaffirming the Jewish values of justice, human dignity and responsibility that must remain at the heart of the society we are building."

Jerusalem Post Staff and Sarah Ben-Nun contributed to this report.

AM:PM CEO Shirel Hogege joins Eisenkot's Yashar Party

• By SHIR PERETS and Jerusalem Post Staff

CEO of grocery chain AM:PM Shirel Hogege has joined Gadi Eisenkot's Yashar Party.

"Shirel is a symbol of the citizens who rose up after October 7, took responsibility, and decided to act to lead Israel toward repair. He is a sharp and clear voice in the call for a state commission of inquiry," Eisenkot said on Monday.

"Shirel has extensive experience in managing and streamlining systems and companies. We will restore professionalism and excellence by streamlining government operations and assessing every government decision through the lens of its benefit to the citizen."

Hogege, a resident of Ofakim, where he was born and raised, has held a series of senior positions in the business sector and became an outspoken voice for reform in the aftermath of the Hamas massacre.

"October 7 exposed to all of us the depth of the failure and the price we pay when state systems do not function, but it also proved the tremendous strength that exists in Israeli society and in the people who get up, take responsibility, and act for the good of the country," Hogege said.

"After years of neglect and prioritizing political

needs over national ones, we need to build an excellent, professional public service free of extraneous considerations – one that understands that the citizen is not an inconvenience, but the reason for its existence."

Hogege also described a program he would be leading as part of Yashar, designed to "bring Israeli excellence, innovation, and entrepreneurship into government ministries, improve the quality of decision-making processes, and help build a more efficient, advanced, and service-oriented country for every citizen, everywhere."

Last week, Ramat Gan Deputy Mayor and head of the Diamond Exchange District Administration Israel Zari also joined Yashar.

Previous recruits include former Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) chief Yoram Cohen, economist Shaul Meridor, former ministers Matan Kahana and Orit Farkash-Hacohen, former Aharai CEO Inbar Harush Giti, social activist Alex Rif, attorney Inbar Yehezkel, educator Dvora Sharifian Bachar, former Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories head Maj.-Gen. (res.) Kamil Abu Rokon, Drom HaSharon Regional Council head Oshrat Gani Gonen, and social activist Yaffa Tabaja.

Einav Zangauker says Golan broke his promise to add her to Democrats' slate

• By KESHET NEEV

Activist Einav Zangauker, the mother of former hostage Matan Zangauker, said Democrats Party leader Yair Golan had promised her a spot near the top of the party's Knesset slate but later backed out of the agreement.

The left-wing Democrats finalized its Knesset slate last month after more than 97,000 of its registered members voted in internal primaries to determine which candidates would be on the party's list ahead of the elections.

Zangauker stated that in February she had met with Golan and was guaranteed by him a spot near the top of the list, immediately after the incumbent MKs.

"From that moment on, I was asked to keep it secret. Golan's associates maintained contact

with me throughout, and on several occasions during this period, the commitment was reaffirmed directly by Yair himself," she wrote on X/Twitter.

"Each time, I was told that a word is a word, that our agreement remained in effect, and that after the list of candidates in the primaries had been chosen, my guaranteed placement at the top of the list would be announced."

She also noted that as part of the agreement, she was asked to keep a low media profile during the period leading up to the election.

"Of course, I honored my commitment and kept our agreement confidential. I kept a low profile and did not explore other options, such as running in the primaries, nor did I pursue other opportunities. I held up my end of the agreement."

Zangauker also called on the

government to be replaced, so that it would "not succeed in its plot to erase and make people forget the [October 7] massacre, the abandonment, and the utter failure for which it bears responsibility on every front."

Golan responded to Zangauker's statement, acknowledging that he had decided not to place her on the party's list.

"I know that my decision disappointed you, and I am deeply sorry for that. It was my decision, and I take full responsibility for it and for the pain it caused you," he stated, directly addressing Zangauker.

Golan added that he had decided not to reserve a spot on the party list, "out of respect for the decision of the 113,000 members of the Democrats and out of confidence in the excellent list they chose."

"This was a decision I made regarding the list as a whole,

and other candidates who were considered for reserved spots received the same message from me: there will be no reserved spots.

"I offered you a significant role in the campaign and to continue working with us after the election. That offer still stands. I see you as an important partner on this journey."

During the Democrats' primaries, Golan remained in first place. Democrats MK Naama Lazimi secured second. She was followed by fellow MKs Gilad Kariv and Efrat Rayten.

The fifth through 10th slots went to social and political activist Yaya Fink, former Meretz MK Gaby Lasky, social activist and reservist Omri Ronen, former Meretz MK Michal Rozin, judicial reform protest leader Moshe Radman, and Arab Israeli activist Soumaya Bashir.

JOINT DEFENSE AGREEMENT COULD TURN OUT TO BE A 'PAPER TIGER'

Expert: Tehran may view Mecca pact as big win

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

The Mecca Joint Defense Agreement is likely to be viewed by Tehran as a major success resulting from its aerial attacks on Gulf states, regardless of how strong the new pact proves to be, experts told *The Jerusalem Post* on Monday.

Emirati researcher and foreign policy expert Huda Albadi said the pact was ineffectual, describing it as a “paper tiger.” Albadi warned that it was a sign of a concerning regional mentality that would see Israel cast as the destabilizing power, not Iran.

Though the countries announced in their joint statement on Friday that an attack on any of the trio, Pakistan, Turkey, or Saudi Arabia, would be seen as an attack on them all, Iranian deputy energy minister Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said on Sunday that arrangements had been made for Iran to import 450 megawatts of electricity from Turkey. The announcement came the same day that the Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist organization attacked a Saudi Arabian oil refinery and after months of attacks from Iran and its proxies in Iraq.

“Saudi Arabia has not taken any action against any of the aggressors attacking its territory, meaning Iran, the Houthis, and the militias in Iraq. They have not done anything about it,” she said. “However, they are looking at Israel as if it is the enemy. It is delusional at this point because you are being attacked on a daily basis by other aggressors, but you are focusing on a country that is not interested in you and has nothing to do with you.”

For Ankara, Albadi said the pact was part of its aspirations to return to the days of the powerful and expansive Ottoman Empire. “They try to meddle in every country they can, and it is not surprising coming from a government that is literally the Muslim Brotherhood. That is what they do. But I don’t think they are going to get anything out of it,” she said.

Though not speaking on behalf of the pact, only a day after the agreement was announced, Pakistan’s Defense Minister Khawaja Asif told Pakistan media that there should be “a united military front” against Israel, which he described as a “threat to the entire Muslim world.”

“Their attitude towards the Palestinians and their anti-Islamic mindset will not disappear. They continue to incite Muslim countries against each other,” the minister said, seemingly pointing blame at Israel for the attacks from Iran on Muslim states.

Albadi said that she doubted that any of the three countries truly placed blame on Israel. However, she noted that the Jewish state was a convenient scapegoat to avoid confronting Iran and its more domestic supporters. Though Sunni majority countries, Pakistan has between 20 and 40 million Shi’ites, Saudi Arabia has between two and four million, and Turkey has between seven and 20 million, according to official estimates and census data.

“Of course, they will come up with this propaganda or this narrative because that is the way to make it convenient for them, so Iran can back down. But Iran is not going to back down,” she said. “Its actions, over and over again, have proven that its track record is really bad with any country you can think of. [Iran] has broken every agreement... and then has the audacity to act like it is the victim.”

Iran seemingly welcomed the opportunity to adopt that narrative on Monday, when Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei celebrated the countries’ embrace of more

regional powers in place of the US.

“Any plan that is based on the geopolitical and historical realities of the region, is comprehensive and inclusive, and correctly identifies the enemy and the threat, has a chance of helping to strengthen security and prevent instability and abuses by the Zionist enemy and its allies,” he added, referring to Israel.

As part of that convenient framing, the pact has also taken on a notably Sunni-Islamic religious identity, she said.

“Even in the official statement that came out of this pact, it says the pact is built on Islamic relations. It is very odd in this day and age for a country, for a state, to build

relations and pacts based on religion. We are not in the seventh century. We are in 2026, yet people still use religion to appease others and appeal to their emotions,” Albadi said. “People in the Middle East are very emotional about their religion, and when they hear that the country that holds the two holy mosques is doing something, it carries a lot of weight.”

Even though Iran began attacking its fellow Islamic countries during Ramadan, “they want to give [the impression] that this alliance is a Muslim alliance and an alliance against the enemies of the region, and what they mean by that is basically Israel.”

International relations

expert Dr. Arman Mahmoudian, a research fellow at the University of South Florida’s Global and National Security Institute, told the *Post* that, outside of further complicating Jerusalem’s aspirations to normalize with Riyadh, it also showed efforts to reduce dependence on “any single external security guarantor,” potentially reducing the weight that Washington has in the region.

“One of the incentives behind Saudi normalization with Israel had been the possibility that it could facilitate a broader package with Washington, including stronger US security commitments and cooperation on civilian nuclear energy,” he said. “If Riyadh believes that Turkey and Pakistan

can supplement its security architecture, the urgency of reaching such an arrangement through normalization with Israel diminishes somewhat.”

Still, Mahmoudian advised that the “agreement should not necessarily be interpreted as Riyadh joining an explicitly anti-Israel bloc,” even if Pakistan doesn’t recognize Israel and Turkey has maintained an “extremely strained political relationship.”

He suggested that Riyadh has not yet “shut the door” on the possibility of normalizing with Israel if political circumstances change, “particularly if there is meaningful movement on the Palestinian issue.”

Mahmoudian also claimed

that Tehran would have a more complicated perspective on the agreement than what Baghaei was willing to admit.

“On the one hand, Iran will be uncomfortable with the emergence of a security framework bringing together Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan,” he outlined. “These are three major Sunni powers; Pakistan possesses nuclear weapons, and Turkey has one of the region’s strongest conventional militaries. Particularly following the recent confrontation between Iran and the Gulf states, Tehran cannot completely dismiss the possibility that part of the agreement’s purpose is to strengthen deterrence against Iran and Iran-aligned actors.”

However, he said, Tehran is likely happy that security arrangements are being sought without the US’s involvement. Moreover, he continued, “if closer Saudi cooperation with Turkey and Pakistan makes normalization with Israel more difficult, that would certainly be welcomed in Tehran.”

“I would characterize the agreement less as the emergence of a coherent ‘Sunni NATO’ and more as another indication that the Middle East is moving toward a more fragmented and multi-polar security architecture, in which states are hedging by developing several overlapping partnerships, rather than relying exclusively on one alliance or great power,” he concluded.

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PROF. EYTAN GILBOA TO POST:

‘Israel unlikely to compromise security for peace’

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

Israel is unlikely to make security concessions as part of any new peace agreement with regional countries, making it difficult for those seeking to lull Israel into a false sense of security before launching an attack to succeed, Prof. Eytan Gilboa told *The Jerusalem Post* on Monday.

Gilboa is an expert on diplomacy at Bar-Ilan University and Reichman University and a senior research associate at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

Gilboa spoke with the *Post* after KAN reported that officials from a regional country advised another to agree with Israel to “lull it to sleep” before an attack.

Though the countries involved in the alleged plan were unnamed by KAN, as were the foreign sources who informed the Israeli public broadcaster of the alleged scheme, Gilboa had little doubt that such a tactic would fail.

“That’s the problem with October 7. The trauma is so significant and will last for so long that I don’t think signing peace agreements in the future that require substantial security compromises,” he said. “I don’t think that would be possible.”

Doubting that any countries Israel currently has any kind



MEMBERS OF a family whose father was murdered by Hamas terrorists on October 7 search the rubble of his home in Kibbutz Be’eri items they can salvage. (Chen Schimmel)

of agreement with would risk offering such advice, Gilboa noted that several countries and armed groups are currently in a state of negotiation with Israel or are being pushed by Washington to begin such talks.

A possible agreement with Damascus has been widely discussed since the fall of the Assad regime, despite interim

president Ahmed al-Sharaa’s terrorist history as the leader of the Islamist group Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham and his own history of anti-Israel commentary.

With a peace agreement likely requiring Israel to hand over the strategically vital Golan Heights, something that Gilboa said “isn’t in the cards” for Jerusalem, US President Donald Trump has pushed to see

a security agreement between the countries that would not require such a concession.

Gilboa said the rough idea would see Israel withdraw from areas in Syria beyond the 1974 separation line, agreed upon by the Disengagement Agreement, for Damascus to “commit to some kind of non-belligerence agreement, pledging not to attack Israel.”

Regardless of what Trump may want, Gilboa said he couldn’t see such an agreement materializing because neither Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nor whoever is in power following the upcoming election is likely to withdraw from the territories in exchange for “f commitments that you never know whether the other side will

implement or respect.” On the Lebanon front, where there are discussions and processes in play to perhaps see an Israeli withdrawal, Gilboa said Lebanon had a genuine desire to end the war, even if Hezbollah was focused on creating more instability.

“If Hezbollah were to disarm, I think there’s a good chance for Israel to take a chance on peace with Lebanon,” he said, adding such a gamble would only be made if the Lebanese Armed Forces can demonstrate its capable of policing Hezbollah in the pilot zones.

THERE ARE also discussions to see Hamas disarmed and the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza take over the Palestinian territory. Though Israeli experts have made clear that the Board of Peace’s 15-point plan to see the transfer of weapons and power as insufficient, and Israel has already rejected the agreement, Gilboa said there was a faint chance of a reformed Palestinian Authority eventually being allowed to take control.

The BoP “think that Hamas’s disarmament could be carried out gradually, that Hamas is serious about doing it, and that an international stabilization force, with soldiers from Morocco, the UAE and other countries, would be able to take over. But Hamas has not

changed its goal of destroying Israel. Given that reality, I believe the chances of meaningful peace negotiations and agreements in the next decade are slim,” he said.

Outside the question of which actor is believed capable of lulling Israel into a false sense of security with an agreement, Gilboa said October 7 marked a significant change in Israel’s calculus. While before the massacre it had focused on which groups were capable of doing harm, it now also looked at which actors have bad intentions.

“Since then, Israel would not judge the positions of any potential enemy based on intentions. You can sign a peace agreement with the intention of maintaining peace, but that would not guide Israeli national security. The main guideline would be capabilities. Are you developing military capabilities that could threaten Israel’s survival? That is the main issue.

“I believe that even if, somehow, through American mediation, another peace agreement were signed in the next decade with any country in the region, the agreement would be judged based on capabilities,” he concluded. “Therefore, the probability of a country signing a peace agreement with Israel while accumulating military power designed to attack Israel would be very low.”

Trump’s Gaza plan hinges on Hamas disarmament and Israeli withdrawals

• Reuters

Donald Trump’s latest plan to end the Gaza war calls on Hamas to lay down its arms as Israel withdraws from the territory, terms endorsed by the terrorists but rejected by Israel, which says it will not pull back until the group’s disarmament is complete.

What is Trump’s latest plan for Gaza?

The US president on July 30 hailed what he described as a breakthrough in talks to advance a 2025 ceasefire plan, saying that Hamas and other Gaza terrorists had accepted a 15-point road map by his Board of Peace to give up their weapons.

That 2025 ceasefire plan has reduced violence but failed to end Israeli attacks in Gaza or secure the terrorists’ disarmament, both the focus of months of painstaking negotiations between the Board of Peace and Hamas in Cairo.

The road map is meant to move the original plan forward, with Israel withdrawing from the territory and Gaza, devastated by two years of full-scale Israeli military assault, being rebuilt under a new US-backed Palestinian technocratic government.

What are the main points of the Gaza road map?

The road map says Israel and Hamas would immediately cease “all military operations” in Gaza, according to the text of the plan published by the Board of Peace. It links Israeli withdrawal from Gaza to the disarming of all militias, including Hamas.



PALESTINIAN CIVIL defense teams work to recover the remains of members of the Karam family from under the rubble of their home in Gaza City last week. (Ahmad Hasaballah/Getty Images)

The new technocratic government – known as the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza – would assume civil governance and oversee a process to “decommission and store heavy weapons, military production sites, depots of weapons, and tunnels,” the road map says.

The road map also says that a temporary peacekeeping body known as the “International Stabilization Force” would deploy to Gaza to secure areas from which Israeli forces withdrew. The ISF would also train new Palestinian police forces and support aid deliveries.

What is happening on the ground in Gaza?

Israel has scaled back its attacks in Gaza since Trump announced his plan, with Israeli officials saying that in compliance with it, the military would act against immediate threats but would no longer carry out targeted assassinations.

Despite the October 2025

truce, Israel had been carrying out near-daily air strikes in Gaza – attacks that Hamas-run health authorities say have killed more than 1,200 Palestinians, most of them civilians. Four Israeli soldiers were killed by Gaza terrorists in that time.

Israel says its attacks were aimed at addressing threats to its forces in Gaza or killing terrorists who took part in the 2023 Hamas attacks that precipitated the war.

The October ceasefire left Israeli forces in control of over half of Gaza, since expanded to around two-thirds. There, they have bulldozed remaining buildings, destroyed Hamas tunnels and evicted people.

Gaza’s nearly entire 2 million population is confined to a tiny strip of land under Hamas control along the coast, most in makeshift tents or damaged buildings.

Despite the deadlock on the ground, the Board of Peace has been setting up a base in Israel, near the Kerem Shalom cross-

ing into Gaza, that would function as a logistics and staging area for ISF troops if and when they are deployed into Gaza.

Diplomats say the ISF is still likely months away from deployment. So far, only Morocco and Uganda have pledged troops. Kosovo, Albania, and Kazakhstan have committed military planners and medics. Indonesia, which previously offered to send thousands of military personnel for medical and reconstruction roles, says its talks are on hold.

What do Israel and Hamas say about Trump’s latest plan?

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that Trump’s new plan was unacceptable as it stands but that Israel was exchanging ideas on the subject with Washington. He restated that Israel would not pull out of Gaza until disarmament was complete.

Hamas endorsed the road map but protested when the Board of Peace later posted on X/Twitter that it should give up light weapons such as guns and that Israel would only withdraw once disarmament was complete. The road map’s text calls for the two to be linked, in phases.

In an interview with Channel 12 News on Sunday, Nikolay Mladenov, the Board of Peace’s Gaza envoy, confirmed the process would be phased and carried out “sector by sector.”

Each time a designated area of Gaza has been verified to be effectively weapon-free, with arms stored and rendered unusable, Israel would be required to withdraw, eventually all the way, Mladenov said.

‘BoP deal would allow Hamas to reclaim its arms’

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

The Board of Peace’s proposed agreement to disarm Hamas would leave Israel restricted in its ability to deal with immediate and emerging threats, while allowing Hamas to remain armed with “personal weapons,” according to an assessment by Dr. Igal Shiri published by the Meir Amit Terrorism and Intelligence Research Institute.

The 15-point plan, which was rejected by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, notably failed to see Hamas relinquish its weapons, only seeing the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza store the weapons and decommission them under point 8.

Shiri noted that a political crisis or the collapse of the NCAG, or a similar armed takeover of storage facilities like the one seen during Hamas’s 2007 takeover of Gaza, could result in Hamas being rearmed.

Additionally, Shiri warned that it remained unclear whether a complete inventory of Hamas’s weapons production facilities, tunnels and other infrastructure would be handed over, and whether these structures would be dismantled or completely destroyed under the supervision of parties not allied with Hamas, rather than only by Turkey and Qatar.

Critically, under the ninth point of the agree-

ment, Hamas members would be allowed to retain “personal weapons” registered and licensed with the NCAG. Shiri said such a process would do little to ensure the complete dismantlement of Hamas’s military wings or prevent current and former Hamas police members from rearming, particularly if they are allowed to integrate into the new security forces.

Netanyahu said on Sunday he would not allow a deal that promises “fictitious disarmament,” where Hamas is allowed to retain arms.

“When I say Hamas is disarmed, that means the heavy weapons, the less heavy weapons – all the weapons,” he said.

Shiri also pointed to Hamas’s declaration that it would continue to work to “liberate all of the land from the occupation on all fronts.”

He argued that Hamas therefore had no intention of implementing the agreement in the spirit in which it was written, but instead could use it as an opportunity to reorganize and raise resources.

As for the fate of Hamas’s current commanders and terrorist operatives, including those who participated in the October 7 massacre, the agreement is also vague and it is unclear whether they will be allowed to stay in the Gaza Strip, though point seven would allow those in the Palestinian police who do not pass vetting to be offered alternative civilian roles.



US PRESIDENT Donald Trump, flanked by US Vice President JD Vance and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, joins leaders for a group photo during the inaugural meeting of the ‘Board of Peace’ at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, DC, in February. (Saul Loeb/AFP via Getty Images)

Hezbollah civilians still operating in Lebanon army zone – think tank

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

Hezbollah’s civilian arm has continued to operate in Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh, a pilot zone under the protection of the Lebanese Armed Forces, according to the Alma Research and Education Center.

As previously reported, Hezbollah’s Islamic Health Organization was able to operate within the zone only days after the LAF deployed to the village. Since then, the center has identified the presence of the Hezbollah-affiliated Wataawanou Association (the Cooperate with One Another Association). The association claims to provide water, food rations, and medical treatment to displaced persons, though it is

closely affiliated with Hezbollah.

The association was able to establish a temporary center as early as July 29, according to the center, where it hosts the village council and provides services to support the returning residents of the village.

Hezbollah’s own Al Manar TV reported in late July that the association carried out its work in “cooperation with the social work sector of Hezbollah,” and the head of the association, Afif Shuman, also known as Abu al-Fadl, was previously identified by the center as a Hezbollah operative. Following the initial report by the center, Shuman confirmed to L’Orient Today that the group does “support the resistance.”

Other Lebanese media sites,

including L’Orient Today, have also frequently described the group as linked to Hezbollah and the financial company Whish Money, which is licensed by the Central Bank of Lebanon, suspended the association’s account in 2025 for failing to provide documentation verifying the origins and destination of donations.

The center claimed that the operation of Wataawanou was to further create the conditions needed for Hezbollah to hold social and economic influence and dependency. It also allows Hezbollah to raise donations for the restoration of both its civilian and military infrastructure, the center alleged, including through an account at Hezbollah’s al-Qard al-Hasan bank.



A LEBANESE army officer looks up at an Israeli drone while standing on an armored vehicle in Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh, a village in southern Lebanon, as Lebanese soldiers deploy in one of three pilot zones. (Zohra Bensemra/Reuters)

• By JACOB WIRTSCHAFTER
/The Media Line

ISTANBUL – Gulf states that normally receive their food and household goods by sea have spent five months flying them in, and the cost is turning up in what their residents pay.

Before the war, about a fifth of the world's oil and gas passed through the Strait of Hormuz, but it has been effectively closed to commercial shipping since March.

Iranian officials said on Saturday that talks with Oman on a new shipping lane were nearly complete, while warning that a deal would not completely reopen the waterway.

“Hormuz is the dominant economic channel in our estimates for the wider world economy, mainly Asian importers and Europe,” said Mohamed Shadi, head of energy and logistics at the Al Habtoor Research Centre in Dubai.

Shadi said the US sells more energy abroad than it buys, so the price spike caused little lasting damage there. He added that oil prices were back near their previous levels by summer; the countries buying Gulf cargoes, and those selling them, have borne the losses.

“A lot of the necessities, and I’m talking food, that these Gulf nations require – Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia – come in by boat,” said Shon Hiatt, an associate professor of business administration at the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business and director of its Zage Business of Energy Initiative.

“So, what have they been doing? They’ve been flying in, whenever they can, their food products and their household goods. And that’s caused inflation in these states.”

Hiatt said coverage of the crisis has followed the oil and largely missed this dimension. “We’ve... put a lot of the focus... on the oil because it’s affecting us,” he said. “But there has been very little actual reporting on the impact of both household goods and food for these countries.”

Shipping companies moved early. Maersk added an emergency surcharge on cargo going to or from the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq and Oman in the first weeks



SHIPS ARE anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Bandar Abbas, Iran, yesterday. (Ali Saeedi/Getty Images)

of the crisis, and other carriers followed within 48 hours.

Planes have helped move high-value cargo, but air freight only makes sense for small, expensive, urgent cargo such as medicine and electronics. It cannot move grain or building materials at the volumes a country needs.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company said last week that 15 of its ships had been hit by missiles and drones since the war began, three of them in a single week, killing one crew member and wounding 20. A 16th was hit Saturday. Qatar lost about 17% of its capacity to export natural gas when Iranian missiles struck the Ras Laffan plant in March, and two cargoes loaded there have been attacked at sea since July.

Cargo that could reroute did. Ship calls at Sohar, a port 200 km. north of Muscat and outside the strait, rose about 40% after the war began, and the amount of cargo it can handle rose 55%, according to Oman’s Ministry of Transport, Communications, and

Information Technology.

Forecasters have adjusted their expectations for how the situation will affect prices. Oxford Economics Middle East marked up its 2026 inflation forecasts for all six Gulf Cooperation Council countries – Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman – with Bahrain up nearly a full point, to 2.1%. Scott Livermore, the firm’s chief Middle East economist, said the closure is holding imports from entering the region, and that moving goods the long way, by truck or by plane, costs more.

Those increases start from a low base. Inflation ran between 1.5% and 2.5% in Saudi Arabia from 2023 through 2025, between 1.6% and 1.7% in the UAE, and between 0.6% and 3.1% in Qatar. Justin Alexander, director of Khalij Economics, has said the effect will arrive slowly and hit each country differently, depending on the extent of government subsidies and each country’s dependence on the strait. Falling rents will offset some of it.

Food is also affected by disruption to the Gulf’s energy exports. A March study by Germany’s Kiel Institute for the World Economy traced the damage through two steps: Gulf gas is the raw material for fertilizer and chemicals, and those go into growing food. Cut the gas and the price of food rises well beyond the region. The study left Saudi Arabia and Oman out of its worst case for one reason. Both have ports outside the strait.

Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain do not have comparable ports outside the strait, and cannot send their exports around Hormuz by pipeline. “This is a big worry for an emirate like Dubai, which doesn’t have very many oil and natural gas resources but is heavily reliant upon expats living there, spending their money and engaging in commerce,” Hiatt said.

YEMEN’S HOUTHIS claimed a drone strike Sunday on Aramco’s refinery at Jazan on Saudi Arabia’s Red Sea coast, a plant

that processes 400,000 barrels a day. Saudi Arabia’s Energy Ministry said firefighters put out a blaze there with no injuries and gave no cause.

Houthi missiles and drones had already shut the plant down in late July. Reports after the June ceasefire also described an attack on the pipeline that carries Saudi crude west to Yanbu on the Red Sea, one of the few routes that avoid the Strait.

Cauvery Ganapathy, a fellow for climate and energy at ORF Middle East in Dubai, said the closure has made it harder to build a planned trade route from India through the Gulf to Europe, because the war has shown how easily such a route can be attacked. It has also made the argument for building it.

“It is precisely to bypass choke points like Hormuz that multimodal projects with route optionality, such as IMEC, must be considered,” she said, referring to the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, a mix of ports,

rail, and roads meant to give cargo more than one way to travel. “The closure of the strait has argued the case for IMEC much better than any project proposal could have.”

Spending that once looked too expensive now looks reasonable, she said, because governments have seen what having only one route costs them. She pointed to Kuwait trying to connect its oil to Saudi and Emirati pipelines, and to more goods moving overland through Syria and Iraq.

“IMEC may not look the way it was planned,” Ganapathy said. “But in its final format it will be based on the principle of diversification, the need for which Hormuz has made amply clear.”

Europe gains from this, she said, because shipping between the Gulf and Asia has become expensive and Asian buyers are looking elsewhere. Japan has signed for Canadian oil and gas.

Ganapathy named Kuwait, Bahrain, and Iraq as the hardest hit because they have the

fewest routes around the strait and economies that depend almost entirely on energy exports. She also noted what the Gulf states cannot do for themselves: their coastlines are long, but none has a navy capable of helping the United States force the Strait open.

Mostafa Ahmed, head of political and security studies at the Al Habtoor Research Centre, said Washington will go on insisting the Strait belongs to everyone while Iran runs it in practice.

“While Washington will undoubtedly maintain its de jure position that the strait remains an international waterway, the de facto operational reality will tell a different story,” he said, using the legal terms for what is true on paper and what is true on the water.

If the deal now being negotiated holds, he said, the change is permanent.

“This transforms the Strait of Hormuz from a protected artery of global trade into a permanent, structural bargaining chip,” Ahmed said, “signaling a severe blow to American maritime deterrence and establishing a dangerous global precedent.”

Gulf governments are already building for the next closure rather than this one. A railway linking all six Gulf countries, spanning 1,700 km., is more than half complete and is scheduled to be fully operational by December 2030.

A second line connecting the UAE to Oman’s port at Sohar, 238 km., is 40% done. The accounting firm PwC argued in May that rail now matters as much as new pipelines, because everything the region ships and everything it eats needs a way in and out that does not cross the Strait.

Whether ships return when a lane opens will be decided by the companies that own them and the insurers that cover them, not by governments alone. Asked what he would want if he sat on a tanker company’s board, Hiatt said he would watch the Chinese-flagged ships go first, then a non-Chinese one, then wait a week.

“I’d want to see other ships go through first,” he said. “I don’t want to be the first one.”

Shabbat protests outside Jerusalem cafe show no signs of abating

• By THEIA CHATELLE/JTA

By mid-morning on Saturday, the alleys surrounding Cafe Basimta were filled with haredi (ultra-Orthodox) demonstrators protesting the cafe’s decision to open on Shabbat.

It was the sixth consecutive Shabbat that the small cafe off Agrippas Street in Jerusalem had faced demonstrations, with no sign of change.

Police were out in force after demonstrators broke through the barricades last weekend.

Close to 100 restaurants, bars, and coffee shops in Jerusalem are open on Shabbat, according to Laura Wharton, a city council member from the Democrats Party who founded Shabus, a cooperative that runs buses on Shabbat. Only Basimta has drawn a crowd.

Basimta, opened at the end of May, Wharton said, whereas the others have been open for decades. The cafe sits near what she called the undeclared border between the haredi neighborhoods and the rest of the city.

Agrippas Street runs along the Mahaneh Yehuda market, where almost every business closes for Shabbat. The cafe also opened its doors during the period when haredi yeshivot are on break, so teenagers who make up the bulk of the protesters have more free time to demonstrate.

“There have been weeks when the average age was probably about 16 there,” Wharton said.

The cafe is not only a flash point in the long-running fight between secular and religious over the character of the holy city. It has become the most visible front in a hot summer of protests and riots across Jerusalem, over a light rail line, and extending forced army conscription to yeshiva students, both opposed by the haredi community.

For six years, hardline hare-



ULTRA-ORTHODOX protesters and counter-protesters face off outside the Jerusalem cafe open on Shabbat. (Theia Chatelle)

di demonstrators who say the light rail was planned without accounting for the community’s sensibilities have fought construction through Bar-Ilan Street, a haredi thoroughfare, breaking into work sites and pulling down fencing. The vandalism and delays have cost an estimated NIS 400 million.

The light rail project is going ahead despite years of obstruction, Wharton said, and Saturday is the one day there is no work at the site to disrupt, freeing up protesters to target the cafe.

Nationally, 44% of Israeli Jews identify as secular and 16% as haredi, according to figures provided to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research.

That breakdown is vastly different in Jerusalem, where among the city’s Jewish residents, 46% identify as haredi and 25% as religious-Zionist,

while 13% identify as secular, according to the institute.

That arithmetic, which speaks to the struggle over the city’s identity, is what non-haredi citizens of Jerusalem say is really at stake in an alley off Agrippas.

Avi Dabush, a rabbi who directs Rabbis for Human Rights and is running for the Knesset as part of the left-wing Democrats, said the cafe was symbolic of the larger national issue.

“It’s kind of an example for the battle that we are doing about the identity of Israel right now,” said Dabush, who was raised in the religious-Zionist school system. He was there on Saturday along with Yair Golan, who leads the Democrats, for whom the cafe has become an issue ahead of the October 27 election.

“We are in the midst of elections,” Dabush said. “So it’s part of it.”

Outside Cafe Basimta on Saturday, demonstrators took turns screaming at each other in the alleys. The haredi teens, dressed in their black Shabbat best, yelled “One who desecrates the Sabbath, his sentence is death,” a verse from Exodus. They also shouted “stop destroying Jerusalem,” while at other times they gathered in circles to sing Shabbat hymns.

Secular Israelis shot back with a slew of chants, of which “enlist!” appeared to be the most popular. They also shouted, “Only cowards send children,” and carried signs reading, “Haredim for our coffee,” a play on a Hebrew word that means both ultra-Orthodox and devoted.

Haredi children followed and tried to defend older members of the community during altercations. Lior Leon, a Jerusalem tour guide, blamed the adults. “The problem is not the kids;

they push them,” he said.

THE CONFRONTATIONS have grown more aggressive since the protests began in early July. Before dawn on July 25, someone threw a bag of feces at the entrance, and on Thursday, Israel Police announced the arrest of a 15-year-old boy.

On Saturday, the JTA reporter at the scene was spat on by a demonstrator, as were other journalists, and Orthodox residents of the buildings lining the alley threw bags of water down at counter-demonstrators until police shouted a warning that they would be arrested.

Police said in a written statement to JTA that officers acted where they identified people “attempting to instigate violence or disrupt public order.”

Cafes and restaurants are granted an exemption from the city’s prohibition on businesses opening on the Shabbat.

Yohanan Weitzman, a Jerusalem city council member from the haredi Agudat Yisrael faction, told JTA that there was an unwritten status quo governing which businesses and cafes open in the city, which Basimta had violated. It “is not the desire of either party, but it is a necessary compromise to prevent conflicts,” Weitzman said.

There has been widespread violation of those agreements and a failure to enforce municipal bylaws, he said. Opening the cafe was “the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

The protests are organized by the Committee for the Sanctity of Jerusalem, which acts for the Edah HaChareidis, the anti-Zionist body that includes some of the city’s most militant hassidic groups. Demonstrators are summoned by the broadsheet notices pasted on walls in haredi neighborhoods with the time and place of each week’s protest.

Haredi groups who are more involved in Israeli society have been unsettled by the protests. “I am strongly opposed to any kind of violence,” Eliezer Rauchberger, the deputy mayor who heads Jerusalem’s Degel Hatorah faction, the Lithuanian stream that sits in Mayor Moshe Lion’s coalition, said.

Asked which haredi groups were organizing the protests and which rabbis stood behind them, he declined to answer.

One haredi demonstrator, who asked to be identified only by his first name, Avraham, told JTA the protests would not stop until the cafe closes. “We want it gone,” he said. “It is desecrating our Sabbath.”

Wharton said a Supreme Court ruling exempts entertainment, food service, and sports from the city’s Shabbat closures, which is why three of Jerusalem’s four cinemas and its municipal swimming pools operate on Saturday. Basimta, she said, is running legally.

The cafe’s ownership by a sect

of Jews who have embraced Christian beliefs has also stirred some opposition. Or LeAchim, an anti-missionary organization, told JTA it is pursuing municipal channels to have Basimta shut, arguing it lacks a valid business license. Wharton said the only substantive complaint concerned tables and chairs placed outside without a permit, and that the furniture has since been brought inside.

Yoel Ben David, who runs the cafe, told JTA in July that the municipality and police had been “incredibly supportive,” and that city officials asked him to bring the tables in as a compromise, which he accepted.

Wharton said the effort to shut the cafe had backfired. Basimta has been doing record business, boasting lines of customers from the moment it opens until it closes.

Ben David is a member of the Jews for Jesus community, which owns and operates the cafe, as JTA reported last month. The revelation cost him support from some Israeli institutions, but it has not thinned the crowds, and demonstrators told JTA it is not what they care about.

For Liora Bamberger, who lives in one of the high-rise buildings encircling the Basimta courtyard, the fight has taken away the one quiet morning of her week.

“The only day in the week that we have a little bit of quiet,” she said, before pausing. “Not anymore.”

Bamberger, who observes Shabbat, said the cafe should be allowed to open and that she did not expect this to end well. “When you have extremism, it’s not gonna end,” she said. “It’s gonna be a boom.”

Asked whether she found common ground with the demonstrators, she said she found it with everyone.

“This is the problem.”

Haverford College settles antisemitism lawsuit

• By MATHILDA HELLER

Haverford College in Philadelphia has settled with a Jewish group over the college's handling of antisemitism.

The suit was brought by Jewish members of the College community on May 13, 2024, asserting claims of antisemitic discrimination against the College in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a contract claim in the aftermath of October 7, 2023.

The 129-page original suit laid out numerous examples of anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist discrimination against the plaintiffs.

For example, lead plaintiff Ally Landau was pressured by senior Haverford College administrators, including Dean John McKnight, into canceling a pre-approved Antisemitism Awareness component of a women's basketball game.

Plaintiff HJSB was "forced to change her routine at Haverford in order to avoid being confronted by blood libels directed at the Jewish people."

Plaintiff HJSE was told by Haverford President Wendy

Raymond that an event put on by anti-Israel Haverford students which claimed Israel was "weaponizing" COVID against Palestinians was not antisemitic.

The plaintiffs were represented by The Deborah Project, a public interest law firm that defends the civil rights of Jews in education.

In a statement on Friday, Raymond said the college had reached an agreement with The Deborah Project. As part of the settlement, the college reaffirmed the College's commitment to all Jewish, Israeli and Zionist students, saying they are "welcome and enjoy equal access."

She also affirmed that "harassing, excluding or seeking to silence Jewish community members on the basis of their beliefs, or any other element of their Jewish identity, including Zionism, is anathema to the College's core principles." Raymond said this principle extends to all classrooms, offices, student organizations, and all employees and students.

"Acts of discrimination, harassment, and bias against



PRESIDENT OF Haverford College Wendy Raymond testifies during a hearing before the House Education and Workforce Committee in Washington, DC, last year. (Alex Wong/Getty Images)

students who identify as Jewish, and/or Israeli, and those who support Zionism, the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and statehood in the land of Israel, violate College policy and are antithetical to Haverford's mission, values, and standards," said Raymond. Anyone found to have

engaged in such acts of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, she stressed.

She stated that no Haverford professor may discriminate against any student, or any other member of the Haverford community, "on the basis of that person's commitment to Judaism, Israel or Zionism."

Raymond also took the opportunity to acknowledge the experiences of the members of the College who are committed to Israel as the Jewish homeland and who "have been deeply hurt by events that have transpired on our campus since October 7, 2023." These events represent a failure on the

part of the college, she added.

According to a statement put out by The Deborah Project, the settlement agreement also featured other important elements.

One revision is that Haverford community members wearing a mask or face covering (For example, during a protest) will now be required to confirm their identity if requested by Campus Safety or the Dean's staff.

The newly-created office of the College's Civil Rights Director will now also have jurisdiction over the adjudication of and response to antisemitism claims in violation of Title VI.

The College has also promised to establish an Antisemitism Committee which will operate as an advisory committee to the President of the College, and will provide an annual report to the College's Board of Managers reflecting its findings and recommendations.

The ASC will be comprised of three Jewish community leaders, three members chosen by Plaintiffs, and three members chosen by the College.

As part of its annual train-

ing related to Title VI, the College will now mandate annual antisemitism awareness training for all students, faculty, and staff.

It will also now be considered a violation of Haverford College's antidiscrimination policy for faculty to refuse to write letters of recommendation on the basis of students' Jewish, Zionist, and/or Israeli identity.

Haverford professor Barak Mendelsohn, who self-identifies as a proud Jewish Zionist, celebrated the win.

"Settlement is a great achievement for Haverford's Jews," he said. "We're hopeful Haverford is ready to again be a welcoming place for Jews. But given our awful experience, we'll stay on guard and ensure commitments the college made are followed."

Mendelsohn also said he

hopes other schools will adopt similar settlements.

"It will be very satisfying if the haters at Haverford who attacked us for nearly three years see that their actions resulted in stronger anti-antisemitism policies. May this be their heritage."

Pro-Palestinian group trashes Aberdeen defense supplier, targets logistics firm in Doncaster

• By ALEX CARSON

The activist group People Against Genocide stormed and vandalized Ultra Intelligence and Communications' Aberdeen facility last night, while also claiming responsibility for a vandalism incident against the logistics firm DSV in Doncaster, northern England.

The incident in northern Scotland unfolded at 3 a.m. According to the group's Instagram post, activists asserted that "Ultra I&C supply military hardware and tech to Israeli weapons firm Elbit Systems and to the Israeli military directly," adding that "actions against the firm have continued to intensify" following previous actions targeting military satellites.

Video footage shared by the group on social media from inside the building showed extensive vandalism, with office furniture overturned, papers and debris strewn across floors, windows smashed, and equipment damaged. Activists wrote messages on interior surfaces, including "ULTRA KILLS KIDS" on a cabinet and "For the poor children of GAZA" on a wall, while a Palestinian flag was hung in a doorway.

Footage from the break-in also captured that the activists had barricaded the door, followed by exchanges between the activists and responding law enforcement officers. In the videos, police officers wearing high-visibility vests and protective gloves are seen entering the facility, instructing the activists to show their hands and stand up, before placing them in handcuffs and escorting them from the premises.

The group's online posts framed the incident as a form of direct action against military supply chains and described themselves as a "group taking direct action to



PRO-PALESTINE protesters chant outside the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, during the trial of eight alleged Palestine Action activists following a break-in at Elbit Systems UK in London, England, in June. (John Keeble/Getty Images)

stop the UK-Israel weapons trade."

A Police Scotland spokesperson said, "Around 9:40 a.m., we received a report of vandalism and a break-in at a business premises on Prospect Road, in the Westhill area of Aberdeenshire."

"Officers attended and two men, aged 39 and 18, were arrested and charged. They are due to appear at Aberdeen Sheriff Court on Monday, August 10."

In a separate social media post, People Against Genocide also claimed responsibility for another action targeting the logistics firm DSV in Doncaster, England. "It is within our power to bring down the Israeli war machine in Britain, and so it must be done," it said, adding that it has taken action against the logistics firm "dozens of times, as it transports weapons for

Israel's biggest arms maker, Elbit Systems."

The accompanying video footage of the Doncaster incident showed an individual in dark clothing and gloves walking through a commercial facility at night, repeatedly striking glass doors and entryways with a hammer while shattering the panels.

After *The Jerusalem Post* shared the footage with South Yorkshire Police, the force stated that the material had been passed on to the lead investigator handling an active probe into a prior attack at the same location last Wednesday.

The police said: "We received reports of criminal damage at Parkside Business Park on Spinners Road, Doncaster."

Police noted that "a number of windows were smashed at a busi-

ness premises on the site, and that a building was sprayed with graffiti."

Describing the ongoing steps, authorities added that "an investigation has been launched and officers are carrying out inquiries, including CCTV checks," noting that investigators believe "two men and a woman were involved in the incident."

Police urged anyone with relevant details to come forward, requesting that "anyone with information that could aid our inquiries is asked to get in touch online or by calling 101, quoting incident number 167 of August 5, 2026."

These actions are part of a broader wave of disruptions and direct-action campaigns globally targeting Elbit Systems and other corporate entities linked to the Israeli defense supply chain.

Palestinian charity funds rise more than fivefold since Oct. 7

• By MATHILDA HELLER

The income of UK charity Palestine Solidarity Campaign has increased more than fivefold since the October 7 massacre, financial filings show.

The Jerusalem Post began exploring the finances of PSC after *The Sunday Times* published an article named "The well-funded activists driving your council's Gaza obsession."

PSC is incorporated as a private company limited by guarantee, rather than a company with shareholders. It describes its main purpose as building a mass solidarity movement in support of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination, and the end of "Israeli occupation."

Before October 7, 2023, PSC registered yearly incomes of £600,000 to £700,000.

According to its incoming statement for the year ending August 31, 2023, it had a yearly income of £773,886. It listed the direct costs of campaigning at £789,528, putting it in a deficit. The year before, 2022, PSC listed an income of £691,736.

However, for the financial year ending August 31, 2024, PSC registered an income of £3,675,576 with a total cost of campaigning of £1,941,615. This represents a 375% increase in just one year.

This increased again for the 2025 financial year, with a registered income of £3,838,259 and a registered campaigning cost total of £2,386,923.

According to an internal report cited by the *Times*, PSC outlined its strategy as "maximizing pressure on MPs and holding them accountable" through online actions, lob-

bying, leafleting and protests at MPs' constituency offices.

PSC has in fact had significant influence over local councils in the UK.

It said it has successfully pressured at least 34 councils into proposing motions to divest from Israeli-linked companies since June 2024.

Additionally, PSC reported that a total of 1,468 councillors have signed its pledge to take all appropriate steps to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people, stand up to Israel for its crimes of genocide and apartheid, and ensure their councils are not complicit, including through divestment of pension funds from complicit companies.

Its lobbying has had a tangible impact on local government policy.

For example, Hackney's recent decision to de-twin with Haifa and its move to divest its pension fund from companies "complicit in territorial human rights violations" came after significant lobbying from the PSC.

There are also other ways that PSC and its ideology influence local government. Kamel Hawwash, who in May became the first councillor of Palestinian origin in Birmingham, formerly served as PSC director.

Sheila Guhadasan, who was appointed as director on February 24, 2024, stood as a local candidate for the Arise political movement representing the Marlborough ward in the London Borough of Harrow during the May elections.

The Borough of Lewisham's new mayor is Liam Shrivastava, who previously spoke at a PSC rally pledging "Palestine is firmly on the ballot this Thursday."

U. of Minn. pays off prof for rescinding job offer after he accused Israel of genocide

• By ALEX CARSON

The University of Minnesota has paid \$250,000 to settle legal claims by Israeli-American historian Raz Segal, more than two years after the school withdrew an offer for him to lead the university's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Segal is an associate professor of Holocaust and genocide studies at Stockton University, where he teaches and researches mass violence, historical memory, and international human rights frameworks.

The legal settlement, announced by the Center for Constitutional Rights on Thursday, resolved a dispute stemming from June 2024, when the university pulled its job offer following a faculty-led

search committee process.

Internal university documents and public records confirmed that the job offer was revoked due to donor pressure over Segal's public characterization of Israel's military campaign in Gaza as a genocide, a decision his legal team argued, violated his First Amendment protections.

Following the announcement, Segal said in a public statement, "This settlement represents a successful refusal to accept the world of lies that blur an ongoing genocide, and a commitment to continue the intertwined struggles for truth, justice, and accountability – in Palestine and on our campuses."

The controversy began shortly after Segal published an

essay, six days after the October 7 massacre, describing Israel's military campaign in Gaza as a textbook case of genocide.

Despite a search, a committee enthusiastically recommending hiring him after broad consultations but interim university president Jeff Ettinger reversed the decision in June 2024, five days after the formal offer was extended. Ettinger informed Segal that other members of the university community wanted more perspective on the appointment.

Public records requests later revealed that emails from pro-Israel donors and organizations to Ettinger in June 2024 warned that fundraising for the center would "grind to a halt" and claimed Segal used "tropes offensive to Jews."

Ugandan Parliament okays deployment of troops for Gaza peacekeeping force

• By MATHILDA HELLER

The Ugandan Parliament has approved the deployment of the Uganda People's Defense Forces to Gaza as part of Donald Trump's proposed international stabilization force.

The motion, tabled by Defense Minister Kiryowa Kiwanuka, sought Parliament's approval under the Constitution and the UPDF Act to deploy Ugandan troops to support efforts to restore peace and facilitate humanitarian assistance in Gaza.

During a plenary sitting last Thursday, Minister Kiwanuka said the deployment was in line with Uganda's constitutional obligations and international commitments, and stressed that the proposed mission would operate under strict humanitarian principles.

"The UPDF contingent will

remain neutral, comply with International humanitarian law, protect civilians without taking sides in political disputes, and operate solely under the mandate of the Stabilization Mission," he said.

Although Parliament eventually approved the deployment, several legislators questioned the manner in which the motion had been introduced, or argued that there was not enough risk assessment.

Chief Opposition Whip Paul Mwiru, representing the leader of the opposition, asked for more time to address the motion. He expressed concern that Parliament was being asked to make a decision with significant consequences.

Joseph Ssewungu similarly said the opposition had not been given adequate opportunity to prepare: "I am not supporting your motion, because it

is an ambush on us."

Opposition figure John Baptist Nambeshe supported Uganda's participation in peacekeeping operations but said Parliament should first receive reports on ongoing deployments in countries including the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and South Sudan before approving another mission.

Nashembe also said that Gaza presented unique operational risks because "it is urban warfare and it becomes very difficult to distinguish between combatants and civilians."

Another opposition figure, Patrick Nsamba, said, "The matter of deploying our soldiers to a very risky place like Gaza, where Israel strikes every now and again, cannot be just casually passed here. We have to prepare enough."

However, UPDF representative Maj. Gen. Henry Masiko dismissed suggestions that the force was unprepared for the mission, and added that Uganda should take pride in the international recognition accorded to the UPDF.

"You should be very, very proud as Ugandans that Uganda People's Defense Forces is viewed as the anchor of stability in a sea of turbulence regionally and now globally," he said.

Maj.-Gen. David Gonyi said Uganda had both a moral and diplomatic obligation to support the mission.

"We cannot be in this house... and want to live in a peaceful country, not to support the deployment of the UPDF to go and help members of the community that lives in the Gaza Strip to have at least some semblance of peace," Gonyi said.

LIKUD

Continued from Page 1

Ahead of each election, the party adopts regulations determining how those positions will be filled.

Under the framework in place before this year's convention, serving and former MKs, ministers and deputy ministers were barred from competing through the district route, which has traditionally provided a path onto the list for local party activists.

A proposal backed by Netanyahu and Likud Central Committee chairman Haim Katz sought to change that rule.

On July 27, the Likud convention voted to allow serving and former lawmakers and ministers to compete for district positions. The proposal passed by just five votes out of roughly 3,500 cast.

Challenges followed almost immediately.

Petitioners before the Likud Supreme Court, the party's highest internal judicial body, argued both that the change unfairly advantaged established politicians and that serious irregularities had occurred during the vote.

Among the problems raised were five missing envelopes at a Rishon Lezion polling station, discrepancies between recorded voters and counted ballots elsewhere, delays in placing election observers, and a text message sent by the party's acting director-general encouraging members to support the proposal.

With the entire vote decided by five ballots, those irregularities became particularly significant.

The Likud tribunal ultimately ruled that serving and former MKs and ministers could not compete in the district races.

Abed then went to the District Court, arguing that the tribunal had effectively replaced the decision of Likud members with its own view of how the party should structure its primaries.

On that question, Shaked largely agreed.

Section 126 of the Likud constitution states that the tribunal's powers do not give it a role in setting party policy or deciding matters left to the discretion of the party's institutions.

Shaked ruled that whether incumbent and former politicians may compete in district races falls squarely within that category.

The convention had chosen to allow them to run, he wrote, and the party tribunal exceeded its authority when it overturned that policy choice on the basis of equality.

Shaked also rejected the tribunal's reasoning that allowing incumbent politicians into district races inherently violated equality.

There was no question, he said, that an MK or minister may enter a primary with greater name recognition, resources or political infrastructure than a newcomer. But political candidates routinely begin races from different positions.

A mayor, former general or other well-known candidate may likewise enjoy advantages over an unknown activist, Shaked noted. Such differences do not in themselves amount to unlawful inequality.

He also found that Section 139 of the Likud constitution, which requires elections to be equal, refers to equality in voting rather than requiring every candidate to have the same level of publicity, funding or political infrastructure.

Crucially, Shaked found no provision in the Likud constitution expressly barring serving or former MKs and ministers from district races. The constitution instead leaves the rules governing district elections to party institutions, he said.

That meant the Likud convention was entitled to change the party's longstanding practice of keeping incumbent politicians out of the districts.

But that did not resolve whether the convention had validly done so on July 27.

On that issue, Shaked ruled against Abed.

SHAKED FOUND that at least three members of the Likud tribunal had concluded that irregularities in the

voting and counting justified invalidating the result. After Monday's hearing, tribunal president Michael Kleiner and David Elbaz also clarified that they had rejected the vote primarily because of those irregularities.

That meant there was a majority basis for the tribunal's decision independent of its equality argument.

Shaked stressed that civil courts do not ordinarily sit as appellate courts over internal party tribunals and intervene only in exceptional circumstances.

He found no such basis to reopen the tribunal's factual assessment of the election problems, particularly when the number of missing envelopes alone matched the five-vote margin by which the proposal had passed.

There was no way to know how the missing ballots had been cast, Shaked noted, but the exceptionally narrow margin strengthened the case against judicial intervention.

Abed had also asked the court, as an alternative, to exempt him personally from the tribunal's ruling so that he could compete in the Galilee and Valleys district. That request fell with the dismissal of the lawsuit.

The practical result is unchanged: current and former MKs, ministers and deputy ministers remain barred from competing in the district races under the disputed July 27 vote.

Shaked nevertheless rejected the broader principle underlying part of the Likud tribunal's ruling, finding that the decision over who may compete in the districts belongs to the party's political institutions. Abed said he intends to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Keshet Neev contributed to this report.

HAMAS

Continued from Page 1

targeting people in Gaza and will expand work at the border crossings in the coming days." Abu Shamala wrote on social media. "The enemy has lost the war in Gaza; the matter is settled," his post read.

Netanyahu rejected the 15-point Gaza plan on Sunday, saying the "IDF will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed."

In response to Netanyahu's statement, Hamas said it affirms its adherence to what was agreed upon with the mediators and the Board of Peace.

"We will continue to engage positively and responsibly with efforts aimed at completing the implementation of the road map, in a manner that guarantees an end to the suffering of our people and projects their rights and national interests," the terror organization said.

Ibrahim al-Madhouh, another Palestinian analyst affiliated with Hamas, said "Israel's rejection of the plan confirms that the problem does not lie solely with the Palestinian side." He added that the "situation raises real concerns that Israel's goal is to empty Gaza of its residents," and that this moment "demands Palestinian unity more than ever before."

A Palestinian political source unaffiliated with Hamas offered a different perspective, claiming that Hamas had anticipated Israel's rejection of the plan. He told *The Jerusalem Post* that from a Palestinian perspective, "Netanyahu will not take any action before the Israeli elections." He noted that "Hamas has been waiting and hoping for this, so it can delay the issue of disarmament and also await the outcome of the elections in Israel."

One Palestinian Authority official said Israel is trying to dictate the conditions of the deal, adding that the leadership in Ramallah wasn't surprised by Netanyahu's statement.

"It was clear to us that Netanyahu's government is not serious. We didn't believe they would agree to implement the plan," he said. "It shows that this government is not a partner for peace, but only for war," the Palestinian official told *the Post*.

"Our position on Hamas's weapons is clear; they need to



SMOKE RISES following an explosion of infrastructure in southern Lebanon, as seen from Israel yesterday. (Ayal Margolin/Flash90)

be handed over to the legitimate Palestinian authority. But while Hamas has shown seriousness and made concessions because it was in their interest to reach a deal, Israel hasn't made any," the PA official said, referring also to Netanyahu's statement on Sunday that "there will be no Palestinian state."

Mohammed Dahlan, a prominent Palestinian politician said to have been engaged in the efforts to reach the Gaza plan, responded harshly, describing the Israeli rejection as "a challenge, contempt, and deception toward President Trump's team, after the significant progress made by the Palestinian side."

He said the Americans and the mediators now "realize that Netanyahu is an obstacle to achieving security and stability," noting in a post he wrote that the Israeli government "proves that what governs its behavior is a denial of Palestinian rights."

TRUMP

Continued from Page 1

you?"

He added, "Not only did Trump not invite Israel to the negotiating table, he didn't even share the text of the agreement itself with it. What kind of morally corrupt person treats an ally like that?"

However, on Monday, Dobronsky walked back his statement. He wrote on Facebook that "President Trump is the greatest friend that Israel ever had in the Whitehouse [sic]. I posted in his favor countless times. On one occasion, not knowing all the facts, I lost my temper and posted something I regret. My apologies to President Trump, whom I admire deeply [sic]."

Dobronsky is well-known in the Israeli and American tech industries. He was a co-founder of a company that developed a toolbar for Internet browsers and later completed a significant exit. He subsequently continued working as an entrepreneur and invested in start-ups.

Dobronsky later moved to Silicon Valley, where he became a well-known figure in both the Israeli community and the technology industry. Among other ventures, he founded Oren's Hummus in Palo Alto, a hummus restaurant that became a popular meeting place for tech industry figures in the area, including senior employees of major technology companies.

Dobronsky also appeared on the television program *Shark Tank*, where he served as an investor alongside Israeli businesspeople and entrepreneurs. Over the years, he invested in start-ups and was involved in initiatives aimed at strengthening ties between Israel's tech industry and Silicon Valley.

Likud commented on Dobronsky's addition to its slate.

"The Likud movement welcomes Oren Dobronsky as the party's first reserved candidate," the party stated.

"Oren is a successful businessman, one of the pioneers of Israel's hi-tech industry, and a right-wing figure," Likud added.

Netanyahu stated that he was "very excited" about Dobronsky joining because "I think we're getting an addition here – you could say additional strength, but also additional

initiative, additional understanding, additional experience."

Earlier on Monday, the Tel Aviv District Court rejected petitions filed against a Likud tribunal decision concerning candidates running in the party's district slots. The court's decision upheld the cancellation of a vote that had sought to allow incumbent MKs, ministers, and deputy ministers to run for the slots reserved for the districts.

The party tribunal's decision was made last week, following petitions against the provision. Notably, the provision had been approved by a margin of five votes, just as it was discovered that exactly five voting envelopes had gone missing. This is the same number as the margin of victory.

The tribunal overturned the vote, and efforts by party officials to reverse the decision in the civil courts ultimately failed on Monday. The immediate result is that the district slots will remain open only to new candidates, without incumbent elected officials competing for them.

Dobronsky's reserved slot is part of Netanyahu's efforts to shape the party and its messaging ahead of the coming period. In recent weeks, the prime minister has held a series of conversations and meetings with a specific group of ministers and MKs, aiming to identify the Likud figures who will spearhead the party's public messaging.

Those selected for this group include Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter, Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman Boaz Bismuth, coalition chairman Ofir Katz, Education Minister Yoav Kisch, and Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli.

Party officials said that Netanyahu was seeking to create a front comprised of figures with a statesmanlike profile and media experience who would be capable of appealing to audiences beyond the party's natural support base.

Likud has, for years, prided itself on conducting primaries in which over 100,000 of its registered members are eligible to vote for the Knesset list. Netanyahu has pushed to change the system in recent weeks ahead of the primaries, which were set for August 17.

The changes to the party's primaries led to a sharp divide, with some party members in favor and others strongly against.

The primaries determine the Likud's Knesset slate, with the party chairman placed first. Registered members then vote for candidates on the national list, while members from geographic districts vote for candidates from their respective districts.

Candidates chosen on the national list are combined with district representatives and places that guarantee representation for groups including women, immigrants, young members, and minorities. The regulations also reserve certain positions for candidates chosen by the party chairman.

In the 2022 primaries, for example, the first group of positions after the party chairman was largely filled by nationally elected candidates, while district positions and guaranteed-representation slots were inserted farther down the slate. Netanyahu was also given several reserved

positions.

The precise locations of those different categories are determined before each election through the party's temporary election regulations. That is why the current fight has centered not only on whether primaries will take place, but on how much of the resulting slate the members will actually control.

Netanyahu reportedly has held several meetings with senior Likud figure Haim Katz, seeking to bridge disagreements over the primary system.

The first vote on the primaries had been postponed multiple times, prompting reports that Netanyahu was working to secure internal support for changing the system.

There were also reports that Netanyahu had threatened to leave Likud if the proposed changes were not advanced.

Some of the reserved slots could also reportedly go to figures such as Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and former finance minister Moshe Kahlon.

Those within the party who oppose changing the primaries have argued that it will cause those who would otherwise score highly in the primaries to fall further down the list.

A fierce critic of changing the system has been MK Tally Gotliv, who is viewed as a candidate who would receive broad support from registered party members.

Parties are not required to hold primaries in Israel, and only a few do so.

The Likud primaries are expected to be highly competitive. Likud currently has around 40 ministers and MKs serving in the government and Knesset. However, recent polls project the party winning only about 25 seats, leaving many at risk of losing their places on the party's Knesset list.

The debate on how to hold the Likud primaries comes ahead of the general elections, which are set to take place on October 27.

The addition of Orden to the list also came after the Tel Aviv District Court on Monday rejected Likud MK Afif Abed's attempt to restore a narrowly approved change allowing current and former MKs, ministers, and deputy ministers to run in the party's district primaries, leaving the restrictions in place ahead of the August 17 vote.

Judge Yaakov Shaked nevertheless sided with Abed on a central issue in the dispute, ruling that the Likud's top internal court had exceeded its authority when it found that allowing incumbent politicians to compete in district races violated the party's principle of equality.

Avi Solomon and Sarah Ben-Nun contributed to this report.

QUAKE

Continued from Page 1

shaking.

"It's not an easy feeling." While standing in the street in his pajamas holding his two children, Bisker said something "beautiful" happened.

"I went to the street with [my] kippah – I'm a religious Jew. And the people there in the street started saying, 'Viva Israel' and 'bless us.' That was very touching to see the people in the street ask me to bless them.

"Usually people think that there is so much hate, but there is so much love toward the Jewish people."

Cliff Katz was in a synagogue in Cali when the earthquake struck.

"We started to feel shaking," he told *the Post*. "We've experienced it before, but usually it's just a little shake for a few seconds, and that's it. But then we started to hear banging; things were falling. And then the earthquake alarm went off, which I've never experienced before."

Everybody inside the synagogue proceeded very quickly to get out of the building. Katz said the earth was "moving up and down and sideways pretty strong."

He said the synagogue suffered significant structural damage.

"Certain parts of the walls collapsed or opened up or separated. There was ceiling damage, glass broke in. I'm sure nothing that can't be fixed, but it looked like it was pretty significant."

However, Katz said that since this morning he has driven around the city and estimated that 90% of the buildings did not sustain any damage. The other 10% suffered damage to the facade, he said.

"It depends on the quality of the structure," he said.

The *Post* also reached out to Cali Rabbi Asher Abarbanel, who said he was busy assisting community members "going through a very difficult time" and therefore was unable to speak further.

STATES

Continued from Page 1

conception – lie, lies, and deception. These are agreements whose purpose is to lull us to sleep ahead of the next blow."

Israel engaged in peace talks with Lebanon, Syria

Israel has concluded its latest round of peace talks with Lebanon in Rome, where the two countries have worked on a shortlist of countries that could send troops to verify the disarmament of Hezbollah.

The talks center around the implementation of the June deal that links Israel's progressive withdrawal of troops from Lebanon to the disarmament of the terrorist organization.

Additionally, Syria's Ahmed al-Sharaa recently told Al Jazeera that Syria and Israel are working to reach a security agreement with the aid of several countries, adding that he hoped for an agreement that could serve as a gateway to comprehensive peace without undermining Syria's claim to the Golan Heights.

Those concerns carry particular weight following the intelligence failures surrounding the October 7 massacre. Internal Hamas documents published in June detailed a deliberate effort by the terrorist organization to convince Israel that it sought stability while secretly preparing for a surprise attack.

The documents described a multidimensional deception strategy designed to foster Israeli complacency. Hamas sought to project restraint and an interest in economic and diplomatic arrangements, including by remaining on the sidelines during some previous rounds of fighting between Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Additionally, the report did not address whether the country that allegedly received the proposal accepted the advice or acted on it. It also does not establish that any agreement currently under discussion with Israel is part of such a strategy.

PLACE

Continued from Page 1

giving Bluth time to set replacement conditions. The military also said Dardik had previously agreed during the proceedings to being kept out of the West Bank. It added that authorities would consider easing the restrictions if he agreed to electronic monitoring.

Separately, Honenu, the legal aid organization representing Dardik, said later Monday that Judea and Samaria District police prosecutors had filed a response with the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court and, according to the organization, agreed that Dardik should be released from detention in the criminal case against him.

Honenu claimed prosecutors nevertheless sought additional restrictive conditions that Dardik's attorneys oppose. Attorney Nati Rom subsequently filed an urgent request with the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court asking Judge Amir Shaked to hold a hearing later Monday and order Dardik's immediate release.

Rom said the defense was seeking a hearing within hours because of Dardik's continued detention and hunger strike.

"Since the appeal... was rejected, even according to the state there is no justification for keeping him in detention," Rom said, citing Dardik's physical condition and hunger strike.

Honenu said Dardik was on the 36th day of a hunger strike.

Dardik was charged with six counts of violating a lawful order after he failed to report to his mother-in-law's home as required by the original restrictions. Sunday's District Court ruling stressed that his continued detention in that criminal proceeding was a separate question from the validity and terms of the administrative order and must be decided by the court handling the criminal case.

Dardik is suspected of involvement in attacks against Palestinians and other nationalist-motivated offenses, including an alleged attack in March. With insufficient evidence at the time to indict him over the suspected nationalist offenses, Bluth issued an administrative restriction order on June 9 following a recommendation from the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency).

The order required Dardik to remain under full house arrest for six months at his mother-in-law's home in the West Bank settlement of Adei Ad. Dardik argued that the condition was impossible to comply with because his mother-in-law refused to allow him to stay there.

A military appeals committee ruled on July 26 that intelligence presented by the security services supported the assessment that Dardik posed a security risk and justified substantial restrictions against him.

It nevertheless struck down the provision requiring him to remain at his mother-in-law's home, finding that the military commander could not compel a third party to house him against that person's wishes.

Bluth appealed the committee's decision, arguing that it should have imposed replacement conditions itself rather than returning the matter to him. The District Court rejected that appeal on Sunday, leaving Bluth free to determine new restrictions.

Honenu on Monday accused Bluth of acting contrary to Defense Minister Israel Katz's position, describing the revised restrictions as a new administrative order.

Katz said in late July that Dardik's existing order should not be renewed and that no new administrative order should be issued against him, directing the security establishment instead to address the case through other means.

The military, however, characterized Monday's decision as an update to the conditions of the existing order, rather than the issuance of a new one, and emphasized that its original expiration date had not been extended.

Honenu called on Katz to intervene, accusing Bluth of continuing to use administrative restrictions against settlers despite the defense minister's policy.

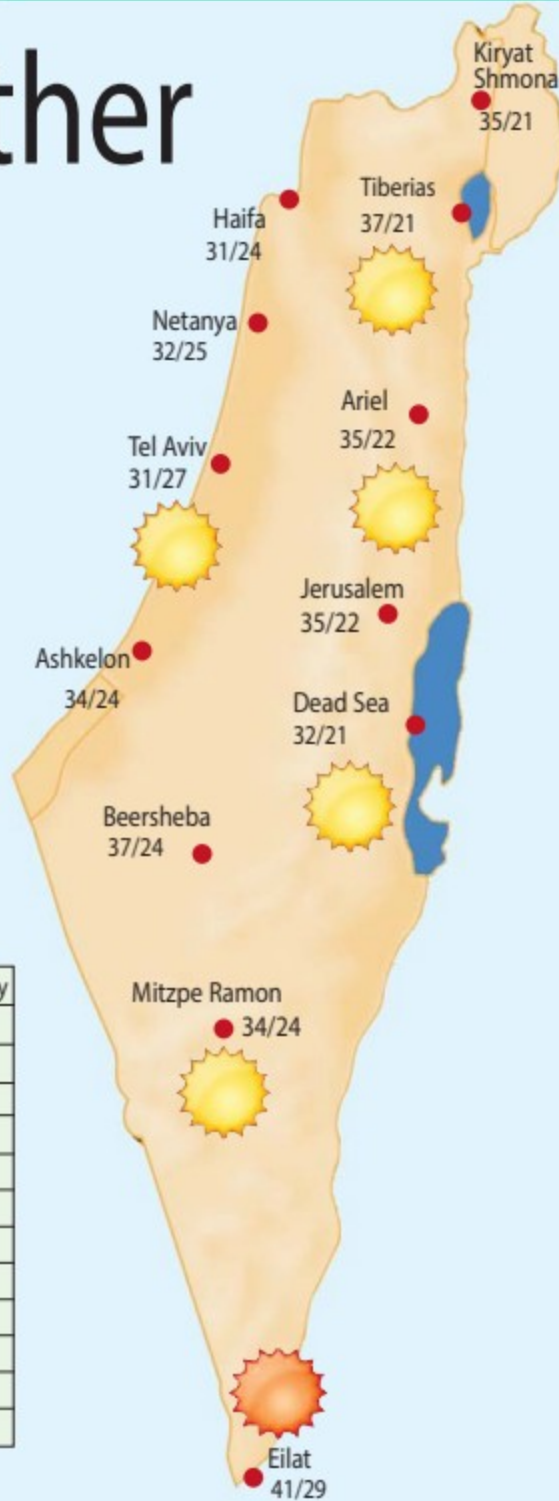
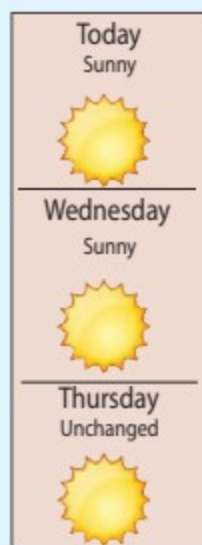
The dispute over Dardik has become part of a broader confrontation between Katz and Bluth over the use of administrative measures against Jewish suspects accused of nationalist violence in the West Bank.

Katz has publicly criticized the handling of Dardik's case and visited him in detention last month. He also threatened last week to replace Bluth over the decision to appeal the military committee's ruling, before later backing away from the threat.

SPORTS

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Weather



North America Weather Today



SPORTS SHORTS

Amazon's Bezos to buy stake in Liverpool

LONDON (Reuters) — A consortium including Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is close to agreeing a deal to acquire a stake of about one-third in Premier League club Liverpool, multiple media outlets reported on Monday.

The investor group also includes Eduardo Saverin, the Facebook co-founder, the reports said.

Sky News reported that the consortium is being led by Amit Bhatia, the son-in-law of steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal and a former shareholder in English Championship (second-tier) club Queens Park Rangers, and that Liverpool owner Fenway Sports Group could announce a deal as early as this week.

"An investment consortium led, managed and represented by Amit Bhatia has expressed interest in making a strategic minority investment in Liverpool Football Club," an FSG spokesperson said last month.

The investment would reportedly value the club at approximately £4.4 billion (\$5.9 billion), making it one of the biggest valuations ever achieved in a football club deal.

FSG, which acquired Liverpool in 2010, has explored outside investment in recent years while retaining control of the club. A deal at the reported valuation would underline the substantial increase in Liverpool's worth during FSG's 16-year ownership.

The investment comes at a time of significant change on and off the pitch at Anfield.

Liverpool finished a disappointing fifth in the Premier League last season despite spending about £446 million on new players. The club subsequently parted ways with Dutch manager Arne Slot and appointed former Bournemouth boss Andoni Iraola in a bid to revive their fortunes, while their talismanic Egypt forward Mohamed Salah has also departed.

Michael Edwards, widely credited with helping build the squad that won Liverpool's first domestic league title in 30 years in 2020, left his role as chief executive officer of football at Fenway Sports Group in July.

Liverpool, one of world soccer's most successful clubs, is also among the sport's most valuable and widely supported teams, with its iconic Anfield stadium at the heart of a global fan base.

The Reds won a joint-record 20th English league title in 2024/25. Their honors also include six European Cups, eight FA Cups, a record 10 League Cups and one FIFA Club World Cup.

Liverpool opens the new Premier League season at Newcastle United on August 23.

Messi mourns death of father, Jorge, at 68

Lionel Messi's father, Jorge Messi, died this week after a prolonged illness in Rosario, Argentina. He was 68.

Newell's Old Boys, a prestigious Argentina club team that Lionel Messi played with from 1995-2000, confirmed his passing and paid tribute to the elder Messi in a statement posted to X.

"Jorge was the pillar and the person who supported with vision, rigor, and affection the career of the greatest player of all time alongside his wife, Celia Cuccitini," read the statement.

"His constant companionship and behind-the-scenes leadership were essential in backing every step of Lionel, from his beginnings at Malvinas to the pinnacle of world football glory.

"Thank you for teaching him to love these colors."

Lionel Messi missed the home match Saturday night for his MLS team, Inter Miami, against Monterrey in a Leagues Cup competition. He reportedly arrived in Rosario on Saturday night and will attend a private memorial service.

• Field Level Media

UEFA, AFC, CONCACAF lash out at Infantino over failed World Cup stake sale

• Reuters

European soccer's governing body UEFA, the Asian Football Confederation and CONCACAF issued an open letter on Monday attacking FIFA chief Gianni Infantino's conduct during the proposed sale of a stake in World Cup commercial rights.

The statement, which stopped just short of openly calling for a new leadership, said that Infantino had broken trust "through deception" with the now-abandoned proposal, had "placed himself above the collective" and the three confederations called for a fully independent review of what had happened.

"Football's strength has always been its unity," their open letter to the football family said. "We call for that unity to be honored now, for leadership that serves football, not seeks to command it."

The Swiss administrator has faced open revolt in the football world since he proposed and then abandoned a plan to carve off the commercial rights to the World Cup and sell 20% of them to private investors to raise about \$4.2 billion.

Sources close to proceedings said the confederations viewed this letter as an opportunity for Infantino, who is seeking re-election next year, to quit with his dignity intact.

The three confederations are investigating the possibility of staging competitions amongst themselves to give players the chance to compete amid the crisis with FIFA, the sources said.

UEFA, backed by the AFC and CONCACAF, which runs football in the Caribbean, North and Central America, have threatened to boycott FIFA tournaments until they receive a promise that no similar schemes will be proposed in the future.

"Leadership in football is not a possession," they said in Monday's statement. "It is not about holding – or



FIFA PRESIDENT Gianni Infantino faces growing pressure from UEFA, the AFC and CONCACAF amid an escalating dispute over the governing body's leadership and proposed World Cup commercial rights sale. (Luisa Gonzalez/Reuters)

demanding – power to be held. It is a duty of service to the football family that entrusts it.

"When trust is broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority, that duty has been abandoned."

They also criticized a FIFA emergency meeting in Morocco last week, saying there was only one elected official present, while also calling for an independent review, which FIFA would have no role in, to determine what led to this "profound failure of judgment."

US Soccer and Canada Soccer on Monday backed the confederations' stance, saying FIFA needed 'meaningful' change.

"US Soccer, Canada Soccer, CFU (Caribbean Football Union) and UNCAF (Central American Football Union) stand together, along with our colleagues around the world, in calling for meaningful change that strengthens FIFA's governance, transparency and accountability," they said in a statement.

The US and Canada co-hosted the 2026 World Cup with Mexico.

On Friday, Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) President Lise Klaveness, seen by some as a potential candidate to replace Infantino, called on the 56-year-old to step down from the presidency immediately.

Klaveness has long been an outspoken critic of Infantino.

Toto Cup semifinals set after dramatic group finish

LOCAL SOCCER

• By JOSHUA HALICKMAN

The Toto Cup preseason tournament group stage came to an end, with the semifinals now set as Maccabi Netanya hosts Maccabi Tel Aviv and Ironi Kiryat Shmona welcomes Hapoel Tel Aviv this coming Sunday night.

In group play, Hapoel Jerusalem defeated Hapoel Petah Tikva 3-1 as Israel Dappa scored a late brace to help the capital city Reds to the Toto Cup victory. After 75 minutes of goalless play, the floodgates opened as Dappa headed home an Ohad Almagor ball to give the hosts, who are playing their home games in Rehovot, a 1-0 lead.

However, Avishay Cohen equalized at 1-1 in the 84th minute, but Andrew Idoko scored immediately afterward to help Jerusalem retake the lead. Dappa then finished off the win with his second of the game in the 89th minute to give the fans a thrilling end to the Toto Cup group stage.

Petah Tikva will face Bnei Sakhnin, while Jerusalem will play Maccabi Haifa in Toto Cup placement games next weekend.

Jerusalem Head Coach Lior Zada spoke about the win: "I felt the exhaustion of the players in the second half, but the final quarter hour was great and the guys did what they needed to do to win the game. I'm happy that Israel Dappa was able to score, although he had a rough time when he first came in, but he did what he needed to. We have one more game against Maccabi Haifa at Sammy Ofer Stadium, which will be a good test for us ahead of the season."

Petah Tikva Head Coach Omer Peretz discussed the defeat: "This wasn't a good game, and it's our second one in a row that we had trouble creating chances and that we conceded as well. We have a



ISRAEL DAPPA (center) vies for the ball during Hapoel Jerusalem's 3-1 Toto Cup victory this week over Hapoel Petah Tikva, in which the Israeli forward scored two goals. (Yehuda Halickman)

good base here, but we need to improve and we have to make sure that we score when we have the chance to. We have a bit of time until the season starts, but we need to strengthen the squad before the league begins."

Vitalie Damascan looked back at the win: "It was a good game against a tough opponent. Petah Tikva knows how to keep the ball, and I'm happy with how we handled it and that we were able to eventually win. It's not my first time in Israel, so I'm used to playing, and the club has done everything to make me feel comfortable since I've arrived."

Up north, Maccabi Haifa blanked Bnei Sakhnin 1-0 as Silva Kani put the ball in off Cedric Don's shot, which had hit the post, to give the Greens the Toto Cup victory. Haifa will play Hapoel Jeru-

salem, while Sakhnin will host Hapoel Petah Tikva in placement games next week.

"This was a better game. It wasn't great, but it was definitely one that was more aggressive," Haifa Head Coach Barak Bachar began after the win. "We didn't concede, and they didn't create chances as easily as they have in recent games. We're working and putting the pieces together. We're trying to establish a core of players who can play together, and we're working and will continue to work. I saw improvement, and I expect to see further improvement going forward."

Yossi Abukasis summed up the loss: "We're playing without a natural striker at all; everyone is a midfielder. The only striker in the squad is suspended after receiving a red card, and we're waiting for a foreign striker to arrive.

Our attacking play isn't good because we don't have a natural striker. We haven't been worse than our opponents in these games."

Elsewhere, Kiryat Shmona defeated Hapoel Haifa 3-1 as the northerners turned around an early deficit with a trio of second-half goals to finish atop Group A in Toto Cup play with four wins and a spot in the semifinals, where they will play Hapoel Tel Aviv.

Liran Rotman gave the Carmel Reds a lead off a poor clearance by goalkeeper Daniel Tennebaum, but from that point on, it was all Shai Barda's squad.

Adrian Ugarriza drew Kiryat Shmona even from the penalty spot in the 64th minute, while two minutes later, Ariel Sheratzky sent a left-footed scorcher into the top corner of the goal to snatch a 2-1

After quelling in-house dissent at the emergency meeting on Wednesday, FIFA apologized to the 211 federations and Infantino rallied his support among the six confederations that make up the world governing body.

Africa's confederation CAF released a statement on behalf of its 54 members backing Infantino on Thursday with CONCACAF member Mexico following suit along with South American countries Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador and Bolivia.

On Friday, as Infantino attended the inauguration of Colombia's new president Abelardo De La Espeirilla in Cali, FIFA released a blistering attack on the critics of the president.

It warned against what it called a "concerted and ongoing effort" to undermine Infantino, saying attempts to challenge his leadership must follow the governing body's statutes and democratic procedures.

FIFA also echoed the statements of several of the bodies that supported Infantino, as well as one from South American confederation CONMEBOL.

FIFA's statement came after reports in The Daily Telegraph about payments made by UEFA to a former employee during Infantino's time as the European governing body's general secretary, allegations he has denied and that FIFA has rejected as unfounded.

Almost 70 of FIFA's 211 member associations have said publicly they will vote for Infantino with around a dozen either withdrawing previously promised support or saying they will not vote for him.

Infantino would need a two-thirds majority in the first round of voting or a simple majority in subsequent rounds to extend his presidency until 2031.

UEFA apart, the confederations who say they have lost confidence in Infantino are not completely united with several Asian nations backing him as well as Mexico from CONCACAF.

lead. Shai Sabag polished off the victory during second-half injury time as he scored into a wide-open goal to secure the win and a place in the semifinals.

Goal scorer Ariel Sheratzky spoke about the match: "We really wanted to reach the semifinals. We wanted it badly, and we appreciate the situation we're in. We need to continue working hard so that we can be even more prepared for the league, because that's the real money time. We'll try to be as prepared as possible and win the next game, but for now, the entire team looks good and is giving everything, so I'm happy about that."

Hapoel Haifa Head Coach Haim Silvas summed up the loss.

"First of all, credit goes to Kiryat Shmona, who reached the semifinals after recording four wins. We had an excellent first half, and we gave Kiryat Shmona no chances. But the second half is something that has characterized us somewhat so far. Our response to the penalty wasn't good enough, and we'll have to learn from that; it's an excellent lesson. The fact that we conceded a goal immediately after the penalty is something I don't like. We got ourselves into trouble with the ball in the second half."

Also, Maccabi Petah Tikva slipped by Hapoel Ramat Gan 2-1 in the final game of the Toto Cup group stage. After a goalless first half, Samuel Owusu scored a screamer off the bar to give Petah Tikva the lead, while Liran Hazan doubled the advantage when he headed home the ball in the 74th minute.

Amit scored soon thereafter to cut the lead, but that's as close as Ramat Gan would get as Ziv Arie's team wrapped up the win. Petah Tikva will now visit Ironi Tiberias, while Ramat Gan will host Beitar Jerusalem in placement games next week.

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COMMENT & FEATURES

THE JERUSALEM POST • TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026

THE JERUSALEM POST

Founded in 1932 by GERSHON AGRON

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Words vs deeds

Nothing breeds cynicism about leaders faster than a gap between their words and their actions; when they say one thing and do another.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would do well to keep this in mind when discussing Israel's response to the Board of Peace's 15-point road map for Gaza.

At Sunday's weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu took the unusual step of publicly breaking with US President Donald Trump, who hailed the road map – and Hamas's acceptance of it two weeks ago – as historic. Netanyahu declared that Israel rejected the plan.

A strong argument can be made for doing precisely that: rejecting the plan because its sequence is ambiguous and because Israel may ultimately be pressured to withdraw from Gaza before Hamas is fully disarmed of everything from missiles and tunnels to Kalashnikovs.

Despite assurances from the Board of Peace's high representative for Gaza, Nikolay Mladenov, that Israel would withdraw only sector by sector, after weapons in each area had been collected and rendered unusable under international supervision, Israel has ample grounds for skepticism.

In short, a credible case can be made for Netanyahu's rejection of the plan.

What is more difficult to justify, however, is categorically rejecting the plan in public while taking steps on the ground consistent with several of its central provisions.

For instance, Israel has sharply scaled back its attacks in Gaza since Trump announced Hamas's acceptance of the road map, and the IDF stopped carrying out targeted killings, limiting its military actions to immediate threats.

In addition, even before Trump announced Hamas's acceptance of the document, the security cabinet approved the entry into Gaza of an initial contingent of up to 200 members of the International Stabilization Force. That force is a central component of the broader plan for Gaza and is intended to support Hamas's disarmament, secure areas from which Israel withdraws, and help lay the ground for a new Palestinian administration.

Then there is the matter of reconstruction. Netanyahu proclaims that there will be no rehabilitation of Gaza until Hamas is completely disarmed. Nevertheless, Israel has reportedly approved infrastructure work for an Emirati-backed pilot project in eastern Rafah that would provide temporary housing in an area free of Hamas control.

This is not yet broad reconstruction, and temporary housing is not the same as permanent rehabilitation. But water, sewage, electricity, and housing infrastructure are initial elements essential to the rebuilding of Gaza.

Governments often accept some elements of a proposal while rejecting others. There is nothing inherently contradictory about that. But what breeds confusion – and cynicism – is Netanyahu's forthright declaration that Israel rejects the document even as his government advances elements of the framework, without telling the public about what it is actually prepared to implement.

Why is he doing this? The answer is simple: politics. Netanyahu does not want to alienate his current or potential future coalition partners – the Religious Zionist Party and Otzma Yehudit – or hard-right Likud voters who are adamantly opposed to the plan. At the same time, he cannot afford to antagonize Trump, for whom the road map is a major achievement.

How does Netanyahu square that circle? By saying one thing and doing another.

Incredibly, the tactic appears to be working. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich praised Netanyahu for unequivocally rejecting the road map, even though he knows full well what is happening on the ground.

And Trump, despite Netanyahu rejecting his plan, has – at least through Monday afternoon – remained silent.

That silence suggests either that Washington anticipated Netanyahu's declaration or that it does not regard his words as the rupture they would seem to imply.

It may even indicate that the maneuver was thought through and coordinated in advance: Netanyahu would be allowed to say what he needed to say for domestic political purposes, while Israel would continue taking measures compatible with the broader framework.

There may be a certain political logic in trying to appease both the Israeli Right and Trump. But what the public sees is a prime minister categorically rejecting a plan while quietly carrying out parts of it.

That does Netanyahu no credit. Worse, it fuels the political cynicism that this country already has in abundance – and needs less of, not more.

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• By NEVILLE TELLER

With Hamas and Hezbollah substantially weakened, Iran is increasingly relying on the Houthis as its principal remaining proxy capable of exerting sustained military and economic pressure on the US and its regional partners.

Currently, as a complement to Iran's campaign in the Strait of Hormuz, the Houthis are attempting to exploit their control of the Bab al-Mandab Strait, situated at the foot of the Red Sea and controlling access to the Suez Canal.

Simultaneously with harrying the shipping in the strait, they are striking targets in Saudi Arabia in conjunction with Iran, whose 2023 pact with Saudi Arabia has been consigned to the trash.

On February 28, 2026, in response to the US-Israel attack, Iran launched missiles and armed drones against Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, mainly because they harbored US bases, but also to punish and deter both Saudi Arabia and other governments for their close connection to the US.

Iranian strikes were reported to have hit energy facilities in Saudi Arabia, including igniting a fire at the Ras Tanura oil refinery. The Prince Sultan Air Base was also targeted by drone attacks, then and later.

On July 16, Reuters reported that Iran had instructed the Houthis to prepare to close the Bab al-Mandab Strait, citing multiple regional and Iranian sources. The directive to do so would be given if the US struck Iran's power grid or energy infrastructure.

Although the order was described as a contingency directive, the Houthis reportedly began positioning missiles and drones near the strait while awaiting any further authorization.

Four days later, on July 20, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree appeared on television to announce that "a maritime embargo against the criminal Saudi enemy" would

be imposed immediately. He described it as an "eye for an eye" measure in response to what the Houthis called Saudi Arabia's long-running blockade of Yemen and a recent attack on Sanaa International Airport.

The result is a second maritime choke point, augmenting Iran's pressure on international shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. The Houthis are targeting Saudi oil exports and commercial tankers using Saudi ports, thus attempting to close off the principal alternative export route available after disruptions in Hormuz.

The operation as a whole is, in effect, a joint effort by Iran and its Yemeni ally to exert maximum pressure on global oil markets.

A few days later, in response, the Saudi-led coalition struck Houthi targets in Yemen.

In short, Iran-Saudi rivalry is being fought out mainly on the Houthis' front, the crisis is being sustained by the Houthis' military action, and the Saudi coalition clearly regards the Houthis as part of Iran's regional leverage network.

But Saree's TV address clearly revealed that, from the Houthis' point of view, two wars are overlapping, and in taking up the fight, the Houthis are killing two birds with one stone. Saree referred to Saudi Arabia's "blockade" of Yemen, and its strike against the airport at Sanaa, once Yemen's capital.

So in attacking Saudi Arabia, the Houthis are not only acting in direct support of Iran, but are also striking at the ally of their main opponent in Yemen's long-running civil war – the internationally recognized Yemeni government.

SINCE 2014, the Houthis, having overthrown the official Yemeni government, have controlled Sanaa and much of north-western Yemen. That government – now based principally in Aden – continues to be recognized by the UN and receives military and financial backing from Saudi Arabia.

Iran's last effective proxy



A MEMBER of Houthi security forces mans a machine gun mounted on the back of a patrol vehicle at the site of an anti-Saudi rally amid an escalation with the kingdom in Sanaa, Yemen, last month. (Khaled Abdullah/Reuters)

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) was alarmed at the prospect of Iran gaining a foothold on the Arabian Peninsula, and in 2015, with the civil war at its height, he intervened militarily.

He formed a coalition whose declared objective was to restore the internationally recognized Yemeni government and prevent the emergence of an Iranian-aligned regime on his country's southern border.

Although a UN-brokered truce in 2022 substantially reduced cross-border fighting, it never resolved the underlying political conflict. The Houthis retained control of the capital and most of Yemen's population centers in the northwest, while the recognized government retained international legitimacy but exercised authority over only part of the country.

Accordingly, from the Houthis' perspective, Saudi Arabia remains not merely a regional rival but the principal foreign military supporter of its domestic enemy. Conversely, from Riyadh's perspective, the Houthis are an armed insurgent movement backed by Iran that displaced Yemen's legitimate government.

Most intelligence services and academic experts now

reject earlier characterizations of the Houthis as merely "Iranian puppets." They are now seen rather as partners with overlapping interests but independent agendas.

Iran provides support because the Houthis advance Tehran's regional interests, while the Houthis, retaining significant autonomy in decision-making, accept support because it enhances their military and political position. Both sides derive substantial benefits.

Particularly since October 7, Iran has reportedly supplied the Houthis with missile and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology, including training, intelligence, and financial support, and diplomatic backing.

The Houthis, meanwhile, provide Iran with pressure on Saudi Arabia and on Red Sea shipping, leverage against Israel, and a relatively inexpensive means of projecting regional influence.

Two possible developments might cause the mutually beneficial partnership to disintegrate. The first, and perhaps the more plausible, would be a decisive weakening or collapse of the Iranian regime following a renewed US military campaign, should a future Trump administration conclude that

Tehran remained irredeemably hostile and that diplomatic options had been exhausted.

Such an outcome could deprive the Houthis of their principal source of advanced military technology, training, and political backing, forcing them to pursue a more independent course.

A second, less likely possibility would arise if sustained efforts by UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg succeeded in bringing the principal parties to the civil war into meaningful negotiations, securing a durable ceasefire and a comprehensive political settlement.

Were the Houthis to become stakeholders in a recognized governing arrangement, their incentives could shift toward economic reconstruction, international legitimacy, and stable regional relations, reducing the strategic value of close alignment with Iran.

For the moment, though, the liaison is firm, and the Houthis have become Iran's only major proxy capable of exercising direct international pressure by threatening world oil supplies.

The writer, a former senior civil servant, is the Middle East correspondent for Eurasia Review. Follow him at: www.a-mid-east-journal.blogspot.com

The price of moral courage

• By JUSTIN AMLER

It shouldn't take courage to stand up for Israel to exist as an expression of the Jewish right to self-determination, and to defend itself from those determined to destroy it as a state and murder its citizens. It shouldn't take great determination either.

All it should take is the resolve to behave like a human.

Yet in 2026, courage and determination are exactly what are required.

Boy George may not think of himself as brave, yet by releasing a song called "We will dance again" in support of Israel and the Jewish people, he unleashed vitriolic hatred targeting him that should make any decent person shudder.

He chose principle over popularity in a world where narratives are driven by politically motivated and unverified slogans rather than by evidence and truth.

"We will dance again" speaks of the denial of the October 7 massacre, the accusations of genocide, the recognition of the brutality of Israel's enemies, and the constant demonizing of Jews.

Those lyrics cut through the fog of distortion that has plagued this discussion for years.

But there is a price for showing moral courage, a price for standing up for principles, a price that is both personal and professional.

In Boy George's case, he has been targeted with vile abuse, including being told he should be "ashamed" for releasing a pro-Israel song. Some called his song "pro-genocide." Many have demanded he be "canceled."

He parted ways with Tony Pontius, who ran his record label BGP, after Pontius said he wanted nothing to do with this song.

His profile was also removed from Bandcamp, an online music platform



BOY GEORGE attends the 2026 Olivier Awards at the Royal Albert Hall in London earlier this year. (Jaimi Joy/Reuters)

that lets musicians upload and sell their music directly to fans.

Following the backlash, Boy George withdrew from the stage production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Yet through it all, his manager, Paul Kemsley, has thrown his complete support behind the artist, saying Boy George has "spent his life being authentic in a world that rarely makes it easy."

While many artists might eventually cave to the pressure and issue an "apology" to safeguard their professional careers, Boy George has remained resolute and authentic.

Back in April 2026, after a horrific attack near a synagogue in Golders Green, London, Boy George spoke out in solidarity with the Jewish community, admitting that he copped a lot of abuse for it, but refusing to turn his back on the Jewish people.

How refreshing it is, in a world in which so many are taken in by false nar-

ratives, vicious lies, and libels leveled at Israel and Jews, to see someone showing the courage to stand up for truth, basic fairness, and humanity when it is so much easier to look away.

Happily, he is not the only one.

A SMALL but significant group of non-Jewish voices continues to speak in support of Israel despite mass vitriol and abuse directed their way. Among them are Douglas Murray, Richard Kemp, John Spencer, John Fetterman, Mosab Hassan Yousef (the "Green Prince"), and others.

They have reminded us that moral courage is not measured by popularity but by a willingness to stand by one's principles even when doing so carries a cost.

They display a level of integrity often absent among many world leaders and officials whose central role is to provide moral leadership. These leaders should

be well-versed in international affairs. Yet many of these leaders seem to struggle to distinguish between a democracy fighting against genocidal forces and the genocidal forces themselves.

AFTER THE October 7 massacre, much of the world's attention rapidly pivoted to Palestinian suffering – and stayed there. Israeli and Jewish suffering became almost invisible. This included the hundreds of thousands in Israel living with PTSD, the families of the murdered still in mourning, and an entire country scarred by the worst attack on Jews since the Holocaust.

Jews in the diaspora, including here in Australia, have been subjected to the largest increase in Jew-hatred seen in decades. That takes an emotional toll on people and the community.

The Royal Commission into Antisemitism currently underway has given voice to the trauma that the Australian Jewish community has experienced, with stories of heartbreak, anxiety, and fear being heard. Many have felt isolated and alone.

Given our history, Jews have a unique understanding of what being isolated means: it means lacking the protection others had in the societies in which they lived. Pogroms, ethnic cleansing, and mass murder have often followed the dehumanization of the Jewish people.

Boy George and other non-Jewish voices deserve credit for speaking up when it's so much easier and more convenient not to. In doing so, they display courage and determination.

And it makes a difference. It tells a community that has been suffering for years that we are not forgotten. Our pain is not being ignored. Our fear is not being dismissed. We are not alone.

The writer is a policy analyst at the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC).

Anti-Evangelicalism: Evangelicals are under attack

A warning from Netanyahu

• By MIKE EVANS

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Evangelical leaders at Blair House in a meeting I hosted. During that meeting, he made a profound statement: “The attack on antisemitism is similar to the attack on Evangelicalism.” This was an incredibly insightful revelation. It describes actions and attitudes that oppose both Jews and Christians.

The attacks on Zionism are attacks on both the Jewish people and Evangelical Christians because Zionism is the foundation of our faith. Zionism was God’s dream that began with Abraham. It means Jerusalem, the Land of Israel, and the prophetic hope of restoration throughout the entire Bible.

This hostility toward Jews and Christians is not new. In Spain, 250,000 Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or die. Spain then began the Inquisition because it believed they might still be celebrating Jewish customs and wanted to confiscate all their money.

I wrote two books on Christopher Columbus. In one of them, I mention how he wrote in his journal that, when he sailed on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, he would discover a vast land that would become the home of Christianity and a refuge for the Jewish people.

America is under attack

I believe America is under attack from radical Islam and the godless liberal Left because it is a Christian nation, and that Israel is under attack because it is a Jewish nation. Jews don’t die in Israel over land; they die because they are Jews.

The godless liberal Left and radical Islamic terrorists are partners in crime. One kills



PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu meets with Mike Evans and other evangelical leaders at Blair House last month. (Ma’ayan Toaf/GPO)

the body; the other kills the soul. They see Israel as the Little Satan and America as the Great Satan. US President Donald Trump is hated because no president in American history has done more to support Evangelicals.

The terrorists are trying to destroy truth, freedom, and democracy in America and in Israel, and the liberal Left is helping them succeed. America is not hated by appeasement-minded leaders and oppressive regimes because it is doing wrong, but because it is doing right.

These regimes believe a perfect world is one with a weak, anemic America that embraces the perpetrator and castigates the victim.

The battle for the soul of America

In order for this battle to be won, Evangelicals must unite and fight for the soul of America. Evangelicals are hated because they believe in moral clarity. Good vs evil is a doctrine of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

As Edmund Burke is often quoted as saying, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

Today, the battle of good versus evil is being fought from within. The America that Evangelicals and Trump dream of is hated by those who hate Israel, the Bible, and Evangelicals in general. They subject them to scorn and discrimination.

The secular humanist assault

There is no attack on American culture more deadly than the secular humanist attack against God in America’s public life. Through assaults and verbal abuse, anyone who contradicts them is labeled racist, evil, or a bigot. The dumbing-down of America has begun, all in the name of political correctness and the new godless globalism.

America is under siege. A tidal wave of evil is sweeping over our nation. There is a conscience-searing moral assault on America’s moral fiber. A spiritual war is raging in the hearts and minds of our people. Behind this assault is a worldview that rejects biblical truth.

The heart of liberalism is the

belief that people are basically good and that evil does not exist. They think people cannot really be held accountable for the wrongs they do. Rather than bringing terrorists to justice or fighting to stop crimes against humanity, the liberal Left wants the Bible and God out of America.

A spiritual war

Yes, radical Islam calls America the Great Satan fundamentally because it is a Christian nation, and Israel the Little Satan fundamentally because it is a Jewish nation.

The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one. At its root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

CS Lewis understood this reality. In *The Screwtape Letters*,

he warned that the greatest evils are often not committed in dark alleys by obvious villains, but conceived and carried out quietly by respectable people in comfortable offices who never have to raise their voices. Evil often wears the appearance of civility.

Moral clarity or moral relativism

The basis for defeating Islamist fascism is rooted in Judeo-Christian biblical belief and moral clarity. They mock Trump because he believes in black-and-white distinctions between good and evil. They see his moral compass as a dangerous instrument. They fall in love with appeasement because they refuse to believe in good and evil or to confront it.

Radical Islam and the liberal Left have a difficult time embracing moral clarity because most of them are moral relativists. They reject absolute standards of good and evil, right and wrong. In their worldview, man is progressing toward enlightenment, and the concept of original sin is considered primitive.

These same people invited Yasser Arafat as a peacemaker and gave him the facade of a freedom fighter rather than recognizing him as a terrorist. In their eyes, the victims of his crimes were seen as part of the problem, while the perpetrators were viewed as innocent and exploited.

These same people believe the lie that bad acts must be blamed on society or psychological circumstances. Moral relativists despise those who grasp the true nature of evil. Victims are demonized, and murderers are glorified.

They make excuses for evil, or worse, deny it exists by refusing to confront it.

The battle for America will not ultimately be won in Wash-

ington. It will be won in our churches, in our synagogues, our homes, and our hearts. Evangelicals must refuse to surrender moral clarity, refuse to compromise biblical truth, and refuse to be intimidated into silence. The future of America depends upon it.

Netanyahu concluded his speech by echoing Trump’s words: “Fight, fight, fight.”

I responded, “We are fighting those who hate our shared values, and by the grace of God, we will win this battle.”

A day of hope

October 7, 2023, was one of the darkest and most hopeless days in Israel’s history. This year, it will become a day of great hope.

On October 7, people from every nation on Earth will unite in solidarity with the Jewish people. It will be the largest event in Israel’s history and the largest prayer gathering in the history of the world. More than 1,600 Christian leaders will travel to Jerusalem to participate in person, while millions more around the world will join virtually.

This is not a political event. It is a prayer event. Believers will pray in their own languages, but with one united heart.

The antisemites say the entire world has turned against Israel. Together, we will show the world that millions of Christians are standing with the Jewish people.

Join us at GlobalPrayer-Event.com.

The writer has written 120 books, is a #1 New York Times bestselling author and a Nobel Peace Prize nominee. He is the founder of the Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem, the Ten Boom Museum in Holland, and Churches United with Israel, one of the largest Christian Zionist networks in America.

THE US-SAUDI NUCLEAR DEAL:

Don’t settle, renegotiate

• By HENRY SOKOLSKI

In an odd twist, Washington is now offering Saudi Arabia a pathway to the very nuclear activity – uranium enrichment – that has been the prime target of American bombing in Iran.

If Iran gets the bomb and the kingdom exploits its “peaceful” nuclear program and follows suit, Israel may be pressed but will hold its own. But that’s only if Riyadh gets the bomb. The US deal, however, as currently drafted, is a prescription for much wider proliferation which no one, including Israel, is likely to survive.

Why? Deterrence will fail as the number of parties deterred rises. And, make no mistake, once Washington greenlights nuclear fuel-making for Saudi Arabia, the spread won’t stop there.

First up is Iran, which insists it has an “inalienable” right to enrich uranium. The United States denies this, but conceded in its first understanding with Iran this June that if Tehran meets certain terms, it may exercise a “conditional” right.

The problem is, even if Iran’s enrichment activities are “safeguarded,” they still can be hijacked to make a bomb. That’s why critics demand that any final agreement prevents Iran from enriching, full stop. They’ve got a point. If the Saudi deal proceeds as drafted, Iran can rightly insist that it should have no less a right.

Second up is the United Arab Emirates. Under the nuclear cooperative agreement that the United States negotiated and finalized in 2009, the Emirates agreed to forswear enriching uranium and recycling plutonium – processes that can bring states within weeks of acquiring a nuclear bomb.

That agreement, however, had a proviso: if Washington offered any of the UAE’s neighbors more generous nuclear cooperation, Abu Dhabi could renegotiate the terms of its agreement. It threatened to do that in 2015 when the US allowed Tehran to continue to enrich uranium under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the Iran Nuclear Deal).

Washington pushed back, noting that the Iran Deal wasn’t a formal nuclear cooperative agreement. Unfortunately, the US-Saudi deal is.

Then there are Egypt and Turkey. Both have large nuclear power plant construction projects underway. Both previously refused American requests to follow the UAE’s example and forswear making nuclear fuel.

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his heir-apparent, Hakan Fidan, both

have said that if other nations get nuclear weapons, Turkey should. It’s currently developing an intercontinental ballistic missile.

Washington and Riyadh downplay these worries. The Saudis demand America trust them. Meanwhile, US Energy Secretary Chris Wright insisted there is no nuclear proliferation danger, and that the current Saudi deal will “reinforce global nonproliferation standards.” It’s hard to see how.

The secretary’s pitch is a hard sell. For starters, Riyadh has refused to adopt International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections that would allow them to investigate undeclared nuclear sites. A total of 144 nations have accepted such inspections; Saudi Arabia has refused. Apparently, Riyadh is wary of outsiders checking on what it might be up to.

But Wright argued that there is a way to “blackbox” whatever uranium enrichment plant the US might build for the Saudis. Possession, though, is 90% of the law: whatever is built on Saudi soil can be seized by Saudis. The Saudis also could bait-and-switch, using the declared enrichment activity to obscure covert efforts. Pakistan might help the Saudis carry this out.

All of this recommends holding the line against even a “little bit” of nuclear fuel-making in states that lack nuclear weapons. The White House counters that we must be realistic that it is better to be in the nuclear slave trade and control it than not. Riyadh, after all, has threatened to take their business to China or Russia – and they have absolutely no scruples.

Really?

The last country to offer nuclear fuel-making assistance to a non-nuclear weapons state wasn’t Russia or China. It was the US. It did this 60 years ago, when it helped India reprocess nuclear weapons-usable plutonium that in 1974 fueled a “peaceful nuclear explosive.”

Since then, no state – including the United States – has offered nuclear fuel-making assistance to any non-nuclear weapons state.

Pushing the current US-Saudi nuclear deal would reverse that standard and open the sluice gates to nuclear proliferation. This, in turn, would pose a threat not just to Israel, but the world.

In 2009, Washington renegotiated its agreement with the UAE and set the right standard of no fuel-making. It should do the same with Riyadh.

The author is the founder and the executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC) in Washington.

• By ARBANA XHARRA

When Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kosovo knew immediately which side it was on.

For Kosovars, Ukraine’s suffering was not something distant or abstract. We know what it means to watch civilians flee their homes. We know what it means to see families uprooted, communities terrorized, and a more powerful neighbor using military force while claiming the territory of another people.

We know what it means to depend on the democratic world to act when diplomacy has failed.

That history is one reason Kosovo embraced Ukraine so strongly.

In the center of Pristina, an enormous Ukrainian flag bearing the words “Free Ukraine” became a visible expression of solidarity. Kosovo joined Western sanctions against Russia, welcomed Ukrainian journalists, and consistently aligned itself with Ukraine and its Western allies.

This support was remarkable considering one uncomfortable reality: Ukraine does not recognize Kosovo as an independent state.

Kosovars supported Ukraine anyway.

That is why President Volodymyr Zelensky’s recent words in Belgrade were so painful for the people of Kosovo.

Standing beside Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, Zelensky reiterated Ukraine’s position on Serbia’s territorial integrity, effectively maintaining Kyiv’s refusal to recognize Kosovo’s independence.

Ukraine’s position itself is not new. But diplomacy is also about context, symbolism, and place. Hearing those words emphasized in Belgrade carries a very different weight for Kosovars.

Ukraine understandably considers territorial integrity fundamental to its national survival. Russia has invaded Ukraine, occupied its territory, and attempted to annex Ukrainian regions. Kyiv fears anything that Moscow could manipulate as a precedent for its own territorial ambitions.

But Kosovo is not Crimea. Kosovo is not Donetsk. And Kosovo’s

Kosovo stood with Ukraine

Zelensky betrayed that solidarity



SERBIAN PRESIDENT Aleksandar Vucic and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky shake hands at the end of a press conference during Zelensky’s visit to Belgrade last week. (Marko Djurica/Reuters)

independence cannot reasonably be equated with Russia invading a neighboring sovereign country and annexing its territory.

Kosovo’s path to independence recognized us – it did not – but because many Kosovars believed that opposing Russia’s aggression was morally right.

Support for Ukraine should never have been transactional. Ukrainians defending their homes from Russian aggression deserve solidarity regardless of their government’s position on Kosovo. I would never suggest that Kosovars should abandon the Ukrainian people because of Zelensky’s diplomatic choices.

But solidarity does not require silence.

PRESIDENT ZELENSKY, perhaps more than almost any contemporary European leader, understands the importance of historical memory. He has spent years asking the international community to understand that sovereignty cannot be discussed in isolation from aggression, occupation, atrocities, and the right of people to live in freedom and security.

There is something profoundly

countries, has also resisted joining Western sanctions against Russia.

Kosovo, meanwhile, chose Ukraine.

We did so not because Ukraine recognized us – it did not – but because many Kosovars believed that opposing Russia’s aggression was morally right.

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uncomfortable about watching the leader of a country fighting Russian aggression stand in Serbia and reaffirm a position that treats Kosovo primarily as a question of Serbian territorial integrity, without acknowledging the extraordinary circumstances that produced Kosovo’s independence.

Of course, Zelensky has strategic reasons for cultivating Serbia. Ukraine wants to prevent Belgrade from moving further into Moscow’s orbit. It wants broader diplomatic support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and closer cooperation with Serbia.

In the brutal calculations of international politics, Kyiv may conclude that maintaining its position on Kosovo serves its national interests.

But Kosovars are also entitled to evaluate those calculations.

Small nations are often told that geopolitics requires patience, compromise, and an understanding of the interests of larger states. Kosovo has heard those arguments for decades. Yet principles become meaningful precisely when applying them is politically inconvenient.

Kosovo should therefore continue supporting Ukraine’s sovereignty and the Ukrainian people’s right to live free from Russian aggression. Doing so demonstrates that our principles are not conditional upon diplomatic recognition.

Zelensky should understand why standing in Belgrade and publicly reaffirming Serbia’s position wounds a country that has displayed Ukrainian colors proudly for years.

Kosovo stood with Ukraine when doing so brought it virtually nothing diplomatic in return.

We did it because we remembered our own past.

The writer is an award-winning investigative journalist from Kosovo and a recipient of the US Department of State’s International Women of Courage Award. Her work has focused on political extremism, corruption, human rights, and security in the Balkans. Now based in the United States, she continues to write and speak on democracy, human rights, conflict, and international affairs.

Israel needs a new haredi political voice

• By MOTI LEITNER

Over the last few years, the haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community has become the subject of every front page, television debate, and political confrontation in Israel. Questions about Torah study, military service, education, employment, and the relationship between haredim and the state moved from the margins of public debate to the center of a national storm.

Much of that debate has presented Israelis with a false choice. Either the haredi community must be forced to change from the outside, or nothing can change at all. Either Israel protects the world of Torah, or it demands greater participation in the responsibilities of national life.

After spending a year listening to haredim across Israel, I am convinced that this choice is not only false but also dangerous. Change is possible. It is already desired by many within the haredi community. Nonetheless, it will succeed only if it grows from within, with the support and partnership of the wider Israeli public.

I traveled across the country and met haredim from different communities, backgrounds, and stages of life. I spoke with those dedicated to full-time Torah study, working fathers, mothers struggling to support large families, educators, business owners, and young people trying to find their place.

I listened to people from hassidic, Lithuanian, and Sephardi communities, including those deeply connected to existing institutions and those who increasingly feel pushed to the margins.

The details differed, but the message was remarkably consistent: many haredim are deeply dissatisfied. They do not feel represented, and they do not believe their voices are being heard.

They feel trapped between two political camps, neither of which



THE WRITER makes a point during an interview at the 'Post' studio yesterday. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

fully understands them. On one side are those who speak about the haredi community primarily as a demographic, economic, or security problem.

Their frustration is understandable, especially post-October 7, but solutions imposed without trust, cultural sensitivity, or an understanding of haredi life are unlikely to produce lasting change.

On the other side are the established haredi parties. For four decades, they have claimed a monopoly on haredi representation, but they have become more effective at preserving their own political power than confronting the mounting difficulties within haredi homes and communities.

The people I met were not seeking to abandon Torah life. They wanted to protect it, but they also under-

stood that refusing to confront reality is placing that future in danger.

They asked difficult and necessary questions.

How can a father support his family with dignity without feeling that earning a living will cost him his place in the community? What future is being offered to a young man who is not suited to full-time Torah study? Why are educational and professional options so limited for those who need another path?

How can appropriate frameworks for military or national service be created for those who can serve without requiring them to sacrifice their religious identity? How can genuine Torah scholars receive the respect and support they deserve while others receive the tools to build independent and productive lives?

These are not attacks on the world

of Torah. Ignoring these questions is what threatens the world of Torah.

This year of listening led to the establishment of the Haredi Public Party. It is intended to provide a political home for haredim and others who believe that protecting Torah requires responsible leadership, honesty, and practical solutions.

We seek to strengthen genuine Torah study while expanding educational and professional opportunities. We want to enable dignified employment, develop appropriate frameworks for military or meaningful national service, address the needs of young people who do not fit the existing system, and help haredi families achieve greater economic independence.

Israelis outside the haredi community should care about this initia-

tive, because the future of the haredi community will have a great effect on the future of Israel.

The economic sustainability of the country, the strength of the IDF, the resilience of Israeli society, and our ability to remain one people all depend on finding workable answers to these questions. Continued poverty, alienation, and political paralysis within a rapidly growing section of the population will not remain an internal haredi matter. Its consequences will affect every Israeli family.

Those who want greater haredi participation in employment, education, and national responsibility should therefore recognize an essential truth: the most sustainable transformation will come from haredim who possess the trust and cultural understanding to lead it.

Coercion may produce headlines, but it rarely produces lasting social change. At the same time, preserving the current political arrangement will only deepen the crisis.

If the established haredi parties were capable of providing meaningful answers to these challenges, they would have done so by now. Israel, therefore, needs a new approach: reform led from within the haredi community and supported through cooperation and coordination with the rest of Israeli society.

Secular Israelis, national-religious Israelis, or traditional Israelis do not have to agree with every aspect of haredi life, and legitimate questions about equality, military service, or public resources should not disappear. They all need meaningful and practical solutions.

However, we must recognize that partnership is more likely to succeed than humiliation, and that responsible haredi leadership that can build bridges with other segments of Israeli society is in the national interest.

Even Israelis who would never vote for a haredi party should welcome the emergence of a haredi move-

ment prepared to confront these issues honestly. They should want haredi representatives who speak of solutions rather than slogans, of responsibility rather than permanent victimhood, and of cooperation rather than endless confrontation.

A strong haredi community and a strong Israel are not competing goals. They depend upon one another. Israel needs a haredi community that is confident, economically secure, and able to contribute its values, energy, and talents to the country.

The haredi community needs an Israel that respects Torah, protects religious life, and treats haredim as partners rather than as a burden or an enemy.

We have spent too many years shouting past one another. The result has been greater poverty, deeper resentment, diminishing trust, and an increasingly dangerous struggle over Israel's identity.

There is still a window in which to choose another path, but it will not remain open indefinitely.

The Haredi Public Party was created because the haredi public deserves more than excuses, and the State of Israel deserves more than permanent confrontation.

Those who care about Israel's economic future, social cohesion, and national security should want this effort to succeed.

The solutions must emerge from within the haredi community, but they cannot succeed without the understanding and support of the wider Israeli public.

This affects far more than just the haredi community and is a necessity for the betterment of Israeli society as a whole.

The writer is the chairman of the Haredi Public Party, a new political home for haredim who believe that protecting the world of Torah requires responsible leadership and practical solutions to the challenges facing our community and all of Am Yisrael.

What El-Sayed's victory means for US politics

• By SEBASTIEN LEVI

Abdul El-Sayed's victory in the Democratic primary in Michigan marks a major turning point for the party, for American politics more broadly, and for American Jews.

The anti-establishment positioning of El-Sayed and other candidates backed by Zohran Mamdani's party, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), is built around bold proposals such as Medicare for All and the abolition of ICE – but also around a strong and persistent focus on Israel.

This approach both reflects and intensifies political polarization, using Israel as an easy way to distinguish themselves from incumbents and the Democratic establishment, which they portray as benefiting from the influence of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC.

The DSA and the Democratic Party's Left wing have skillfully built their message around real and troubling issues: the influence of money in American politics, US military intervention abroad while social problems worsen at home, and American support for governments with troubling human rights records.

Yet they simplify these complex concerns by identifying a single overarching scapegoat: Israel – or, more precisely, America's support for Israel.

Their objective is not merely to criticize Israeli government policy or to advocate conditioning US aid on changes in that policy. Rather, it is to challenge the very principle of American support for Israel, a state whose legitimacy some openly question, while others go so far as to blame US support for Israel for America's own social problems.

For the majority of American Jews – who are attached to Israel's existence, critical of its current government, and Democratic voters – the radicalism of this approach has come as a profound shock. But that shock is precisely the point.

The party's Left wing uses it to demonstrate its determination to overturn the status quo and challenge the Democratic establishment, thereby helping its candidates unseat more moderate incumbents.



DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE for US Senate Abdul El-Sayed speaks during a Democratic unity rally in Detroit last week. (Rebecca Cook/Reuters)

In this sense, the strategy is the exact mirror image of what occurred on the Republican Right with the Tea Party in 2009-2010 and later with the MAGA movement beginning in 2015.

These movements did not merely advocate policies further to the Right than those of the Republican Party. They sought to challenge the legitimacy of the party itself in a sweeping anti-establishment revolt that ultimately transformed it beyond recognition compared with what it had been through the early 2010s.

In 2012, in the aftermath of the Tea Party wave, Republican nominee Mitt Romney lost to Barack Obama, who won reelection with relative ease. That defeat initially led many Republicans to advocate a more inclusive approach, particularly on immigration.

US President Donald Trump and the MAGA movement did exactly the opposite, and Trump crushed his more traditional rivals in the 2016 Republican primaries. At the time, many predicted Hillary Clinton would defeat him.

Instead, despite losing the popular vote, he won the presidency by bringing new voters into the Republican coalition. Better or worse – depending on one's perspective – Trump increased his total vote from 63 million in 2016 to 77 million in 2024, fundamentally reshaping

the Republican electorate.

The Democratic Party's Left wing is pursuing essentially the same gamble today. It aims to attract new voters and build a new winning coalition modeled on Trump's success.

It is also betting that widespread public frustration with a political system perceived as incapable of addressing access to healthcare, education, and the rising cost of living will drive voters toward more radical solutions.

Michigan is not the United States as a whole.

Yet El-Sayed's short victory, following similar successes by like-minded candidates in New York and Colorado, is a powerful symbol of the Democratic Party's internal divisions in an increasingly polarized America, where a growing share of citizens on both the Left and the Right are embracing political radicalism, that could be extremely toxic and even dangerous for American Jews, all too often seen as proxies for a demonized State of Israel in an alarming level of antisemitism.

Born and raised in France, the writer is the correspondent of French Jewish radio, Radio J, and of the French paper libejournal.fr in the US, where he has been living for 16 years. He is also a contributor to the European review K. He also holds US and Israeli citizenships. His opinions are his only.

Commitment to Jewish defenselessness

• By MICHA DANZIG

Israelis have enough on their plate without tracking a Democratic Senate primary in Michigan. This one deserves our attention anyway, because it's about a growing American political movement that has stopped criticizing Israeli policies and started working to end Israel's existence as a Jewish state, and to delegitimize the alliance that helps it survive.

That alliance was never a favor one country did for the other. It built intelligence cooperation, military coordination, and technological innovation that both nations depend on, and for decades, it commanded support across party lines. What is rising inside the Democratic Party's socialist wing threatens not one Israeli government, but that entire bipartisan consensus.

Like Zohran Mamdani's win in New York, Abdul El-Sayed's victory in Michigan matters less because he won a primary and more because of what the win proves: ideas that were fringe a decade ago now win statewide Democratic primaries.

After winning, El-Sayed told Jewish voters that "my commitment to Jewish safety is the same commitment that I have to the safety of my own daughters."

It's an appealing line. It's also a claim, and politicians get judged by their record, not their applause lines. El-Sayed's record contradicts it directly.

He calls Israel, home to roughly half the world's Jews, genocidal and apartheid. He calls its government "evil," the same word he uses for Hamas, an organization whose founding charter calls for killing every Jew and which carried out the largest single-day massacre of Jews since the Holocaust.

That's not mere criticism. It's a deliberate equivalence, and once it's accepted, every other position follows on its own: if Israel is Hamas, why sell it weapons, why help fund Iron Dome, why support it fighting back at all?

That's exactly where El-Sayed lands. He opposes offensive weapons for Israel and defensive ones alike, meaning Iron Dome interceptors protecting Israeli kindergartens are, in his framework, as objectionable as strikes on Hamas tunnels.

The inaptly named Jewish Voice for Peace Action, which opposes a Jewish state under any borders, gave him its first-ever Senate endorsement this year. And after a Hezbollah-linked attacker rammed a car into a Detroit-area synagogue in March, during preschool hours, El-Sayed didn't just respond weakly. He explained it.

The attacker, he said, had lost a brother (a Hezbollah commander) in an Israeli strike, and "hurt people." He has stood by that since. He didn't fail to condemn an antisemitic attack on Jewish children. He supplied its justification.

That's not a man objecting to policy.

That's a man building the case that the Jewish state has no right to defend itself, wrapped in the language of empathy.

He's also not an outlier, and that's what makes this a machine, not a moment. JVP Action had never endorsed a Senate candidate before El-Sayed. In Michigan's 7th District, William Lawrence rallied with Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in Lansing, demanding an end to arms sales to Israel.

In New York, Mamdani won the mayoralty without softening his hostility to Israel while courting Jewish voters. This is a coordinated bloc with money, infrastructure, and now electoral proof of concept.

El-Sayed's public appearances complete the picture. He has shared friendly platforms with Hasan Piker, a streamer whose commentary on Israel, Judaism, and Hamas routinely crosses into open antisemitism.

Standing beside that rhetoric tells the roughly 90% of the world's Jews who live in Israel and/or support its existence as a Jewish state exactly what his "Jewish safety" promise excludes: them.

That exclusion is the tell. The question isn't whether El-Sayed feels warmly toward Jews. It's whether he understands what Jewish safety has really required.

For 2,000 years, Jews were told they belonged – right up until they weren't. Spanish Jewry flourished for centuries before expulsion and the stake. Russian Jews held legal status before the pogroms came. Iraqi Jews considered Baghdad home until the Farhud. German Jews were among Europe's most decorated, assimilated citizens, and none of it mattered after 1932.

Tolerance granted by some can be revoked by others. That's not cynicism. It's the historical record, and it's one of the main reasons why Zionism exists: not romantic nationalism, but the conclusion a people reached after exhausting every other option.

That conclusion kept being proven right. When Yemen expelled its Jews, one country took them. When Iraq stripped over 120,000 Jews of citizenship, one country absorbed them. When Ethiopian Jews sat in refugee camps under threat, one country took great risks to fly them home twice, in Operations Moses and Solomon.

Statelessness was the disease that endangered Jewish bodies. Jewish sovereignty was the only cure that ever worked.

A politician campaigning to strip Israel of the means to defend itself isn't offering a different theory of Jewish safety. He's attacking the only one history ever vindicated.

Notice, too, how El-Sayed argues. Telling Rep. Haley Stevens her AIPAC support was "the pro quo that comes with the quid" revives the oldest slander in the antisemitic playbook: that Jewish money,

not conviction or shared strategic interest, buys American policy.

He didn't invent that idea. He just gave it a campaign-finance vocabulary so it wouldn't sound like it came from David Duke.

The genocide charge works the same way. Israel fights a war it didn't start, against an enemy that names Jewish extermination as its purpose, and it alone gets branded with the word meant for the worst crime imaginable.

Syria's Alawite regime killed hundreds of thousands of non-Alawites. Sudan is in the middle of an actual genocide against the Masalit. Neither produces a JVP endorsement, a campus encampment, or a Senate campaign. Only Israel does. That's not consistency. It's a fixation, and fixations on the Jewish state have a name that predates this election by centuries.

None of this puts Israel beyond criticism. Israelis criticize their own governments harder than any outside commentator manages, because their children serve, and their families live under the consequences. But there's a hard line between criticizing a democracy and campaigning to disarm it in the face of people sworn to destroy it. El-Sayed crossed that line and called it love.

So, take his sentence at face value. Suppose he means every word. If defunding the Iron Dome, branding Israel uniquely evil, and explaining away an attack on a Jewish preschool is what "the same commitment I have to my daughters" looks like, then his daughters should be worried, and so should ours.

Jews spent 2,000 years learning what El-Sayed hasn't: that sympathy is not security, a kind word is not an army, and a state that cannot defend itself isn't a state; it's a waiting room for the next pogrom or expulsion.

The bill always came due after the reassurances, never before them, and no one who has genuinely and empathetically reckoned with that history offers to disarm the one place built to make sure it never comes due again.

El-Sayed isn't confused about Jewish safety. He's too smart for that. He has simply redefined it to mean whatever's left of the Jewish people once they've surrendered the ability to defend themselves, an idea as old as Jewish powerlessness itself, now delivered in the voice of a father who has never had to bury a child for being Jewish.

And Michigan Democrats just made him their nominee.

Call his commitment what it actually is: a commitment to Jewish defenselessness, and a vote for the next attack or expulsion to arrive on schedule.

The writer is an attorney, a former IDF soldier, and a former NYPD officer. He writes widely on Israel, Zionism, antisemitism, and Jewish history. He serves on the board of Herut North America.

At least 77 killed in strong Colombia earthquake

• By NELSON BOCANEGRA and JULIA SYMMES COBB

BOGOTA (Reuters) – At least 77 people were killed after a powerful earthquake struck western Colombia early on Monday, knocking down buildings across several cities and leaving others trapped in the rubble.

The quake struck just days after Abelardo De La Espriella was sworn in as president, thrusting the new administration into its first major crisis, with memories still fresh of devastating twin earthquakes in neighboring Venezuela in June.

The 7.4 magnitude quake, according to the US Geological Survey, struck at a depth of 107 km near San Jose del Palmar, in Choco, a sparsely populated province on Colombia's Pacific Coast, but was felt in major cities nationwide.

"Significant casualties and damage are likely and the disaster is potentially widespread," the agency warned.

The highest reported death toll was in the western province of Risaralda in Colombia's coffee-growing region, where Governor Juan Diego Patino, speaking by phone to Caracol Television, reported 42 fatalities.

In the province's capital of Pereira, social media images showed a building with a cracked facade crash to the ground, sending up a dark cloud of dust and debris as onlookers on the street darted away.

The impact also toppled one of the towers atop a Gothic-style cathedral in Manizales, and forced nurses in Cali to wheel patients outside in hospital beds, social media and television images showed.

In nearby Manizales, Mayor Jorge Eduardo Rojas said three people were killed.

One person died in Buenaventura, Colombia's main Pacific port, when a building collapsed, trapping several people, Mayor Ligia



THE DAMAGE sustained by Manizales Cathedral seen after the earthquake in Colombia yesterday. (Jonh Bonilla/AFP via Getty Images)

del Carmen Cordoba said.

People remained trapped in Cali, one of Colombia's largest cities, after more than two dozen structures collapsed, Mayor Ale-

jandro Eder said. He added that the city had asked authorities in Bogota and Medellin to send disaster teams to support rescue efforts.

"At this point, two people have already been rescued alive, one elderly woman and one young girl. There are more people trapped," Eder told Blu Radio. "We have

at least 12 critical points and 25 collapsed structures that we are responding to."

Choco Governor Nubia Carolina Cordoba-Curi said there were injuries and significant damage in Quibdo, the provincial capital, and warned residents about aftershocks.

Smaller earthquakes are not uncommon in Colombia, which is crisscrossed by three ranges of the Andean mountains. However, it is landslides which have historically been the deadliest natural disasters in the country, with the Armero disaster in 1985 killing some 25,000 people.

Cities in the country's coffee region, including Armenia and Pereira, suffered a devastating 6.2 magnitude quake in 1999, which killed more than 1,000 people.

De La Espriella, a right-wing politician who has never before held elected office, said in a video filmed while flying to Bogota that he was suspending his planned activities to lead emergency coordination efforts out of the capital.

Colombia's civil aviation authority said flights were suspended at airports in Pereira, Manizales, Quibdo, Armenia, Cartago and Buenaventura while inspectors checked for structural damage.

The US tsunami warning system said there was no tsunami threat after the quake, which occurred at 7:34 local time (1234 GMT), was felt in nine departments and all 32 departmental capitals.

Reuters witnesses in the Venezuelan border state of Tachira and the central-western city of Barquisimeto reported the quake had been felt there.

Venezuela was hit by devastating twin earthquakes in June, which killed more than 6,000 people, mostly on the coast near the capital, Caracas.

Alleged Irish crime boss Kinahan to stand trial

• By PADRAIC HALPIN and NAYERA ABDALLAH

DUBLIN (Reuters) – Alleged Irish crime gang boss Daniel Kinahan was charged with directing a criminal organization by prosecutors in Dublin on Sunday amid tight security at a special court sitting following his extradition from the United Arab Emirates.

Kinahan, who was arrested in Dubai in April, was named by the United States in 2022 as one of three leaders of the Kinahan Organized Crime Group. The US authorities offered a \$5 million reward for their arrests.

He was handed over to Irish authorities in Dubai earlier on Sunday and flown by an Irish government jet to a military base on the outskirts of Dublin. He was then taken directly to the court for a highly unusual Sunday night sitting and was



ALLEGED IRISH crime gang boss Daniel Kinahan leaves the Special Criminal Court after appearing on charges of organized criminal activity following his extradition to Ireland from the United Arab Emirates, in Dublin on Sunday. (Natalia Campos/Reuters)

remanded in custody afterwards.

Kinahan, who was dressed in a black hoodie, black trousers and was wearing flip-flops, said

he understood the charges and was told by one of the three judges that a bail application could only be made through the High Court.

"I think we know I won't be getting bail, but thank you so much for explaining," he replied. The hearing took place at Dublin's non-jury Special Criminal Court, where cases involving terrorism and organized crime offenses are heard.

Armed police guarded the entrance of the courthouse. Crowds watched and recorded on their phones as unmarked police cars sped away after the brief hearing.

Kinahan, 49, also apologized for not having a lawyer present, saying he did not have time to arrange anything while isolated in Dubai since Friday and had assumed a family member would have arranged representation.

A lawyer for Kinahan, who had lived openly in Dubai for the last 10 years and until recently had been involved in organizing high-profile boxing

fighters, told the BBC in 2021 that allegations about him being a crime boss were false.

The US likened the Kinahan drug trafficking gang to some of the world's most notorious crime networks when it designated them as a significant transnational criminal organization four years ago.

Irish police said at the time that the gang had gone from dealing heroin and cocaine in Dublin in the 1990s to operating across Europe.

In a joint statement on Sunday, the justice ministers of the UAE and Ireland described Kinahan as one of the most high-profile individuals sought for prosecution in connection with transnational organized crime.

Kinahan is due to appear in court either in person or via video link next on October 5.

Oil tanker spill spreads off Oman

CAIRO (Reuters) – An oil slick is covering an area of around 390 square kilometers off the coast of Oman, the country's government said on Monday, after a vessel under sanctions and carrying Russian crude sustained damage.

The *Caroline Bezegei's* crew first reported difficulties on June 8 off the southern Yemeni port of Mukalla, two maritime security sources said, adding that initial assessments indicated that a blast occurred onboard.

In its first public disclosure of details of the environmental impact, Oman said on Monday it was seeking to tackle the oil leak in its waters near the Halmiyyat Islands off the southern governorate of Dhofar.

A statement from Oman's

Environment Authority carried by the Omani state news agency said the oil slick covered approximately 390 square kilometers based on its latest analysis that included satellite imagery.

It said the slick extends northeast of the islands towards the mainland and at its nearest point comes within an estimated seven kilometers of the shore.

An analysis by Reuters of satellite imagery and shipping specialists showed the spill from the stranded 274-metre *Caroline Bezegei* tanker was still spreading at the end of last month, raising concern about possible environmental damage.

The cause of the damage to the vessel is unclear, and Oman did not offer any explanation.

Fearing Russia strike, Poland, Baltics shield infrastructure

ANALYSIS

• By MAREK STRZELECKI and ANDRIUS SYTAS

WARSAW/VILNIUS (Reuters) – Russia's northern NATO neighbors are tightening security around dams, power plants, and natural gas infrastructure in a sign of mounting concern that Moscow will stage a "false flag" attack on them using Ukrainian drones.

Lithuania said last week that Moscow is considering such a staged attack and Poland, Latvia, and Estonia have also warned of acts of sabotage to test NATO's response at a time when US commitment to the Western military alliance is in question.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov last month said warnings of Russian clandestine attacks are "scare stories" used to justify militarization against Russia.

Poland and the three Baltic states, which all border Russia and have already found Ukrainian drones on their territory, are taking no chances. "We are not naive. We see the information, we read between the lines, and we are doing our homework," Lithuanian Defense Minister Robertas Kaunas told Reuters.

He, the prime minister of Latvia, and four intelligence and company officials from across the region shared new details of intelligence assessments with Reuters and described measures that are being taken to protect infrastructure in response.

"We are increasing the security of our critical infrastructure; we constantly exchange information with our intelligence on what to do next," Kaunas said.

Last month, Lithuania dispatched the military to back up riot police in securing its liquefied natural gas import terminal, the oil products terminal, a key power link with Poland, and the Kruonis Pumped Storage hydro plant.

"We are clearly signaling that, if needed, we will be defending ourselves," said Kaunas.

Latvia has increased security around all critical infrastructure, including the dam on the Daugava River near Riga and the Incukalns underground gas storage facility, Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs told Reuters in an interview.

"A potential hybrid threat is more likely than it was before," he said.

Russia in May accused the Baltic states of planning to let Ukrainian drones attack Russia from their territory and pledged to retaliate, prompting denials and protest along with concern that Moscow may stage such an attack to justify a response.

A Baltic intelligence official said assessments indicated Russian military and domestic intelligence agencies are planning a possible false-flag attack on infrastructure in Russia or the Baltics and Poland, with Ukrainian-made drones, to be carried out within days of approval from leaders including Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The main concern cited in the assessments was not so much the immediate impact of such an attack as the "political chaos" it could trigger at NATO headquarters in Brussels as its European members and the United States debate how, and whether, to respond, the official said.

Another source, an official from the region, was less definitive, saying a spate of warnings from "allied intelligence" about Russian activity had made an "overwhelming impression" on the Baltic states but attacks could take place "between today and never."

Moscow says the West, out of "Russophobia," routinely accuses it of malign acts without providing evidence. NATO and the Russian embassy in Vilnius did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

In Poland, the top oil and gas company Orlen is analyzing alternative gas import routes in case the usual ones are compromised, a person familiar with its operations said.

Orlen imports 80% of the country's gas through the Swinoujscie liquefied natural gas terminal on the Baltic Sea and an under-sea pipeline from Norway that lands nearby. Gaz-System, which owns the infrastructure, is operating under "increased vigilance" there, another person with direct knowledge said.

Orlen declined to comment on the specifics of any preventive measures. A Gaz-System spokesperson said the firm is monitoring the geopolitical situation and responding appropriately.

Storms from 'Dolphin' soak China's east, some 950 Shanghai flights grounded

• By NICOCO CHAN and LIZ LEE

SHANGHAI/BEIJING (Reuters) – Torrential rain and storms in Typhoon Dolphin's wake inundated several provinces in China's east, drenching the coastal region and flooding streets in Shanghai, where around 40% of flights were grounded on Monday due to the weather.

Dolphin packed maximum sustained winds of 151 kph near its center when it made landfall in Zhejiang, the province to the south and west of Shanghai, on Sunday evening before weakening to a tropical storm.

Its remaining rain clouds continued to soak the eastern provinces, including Anhui, Jiangsu, and Shandong on Monday.

Many streets in Shanghai, the country's second most populous city, were flooded, including in the main commercial centers.

The city's two airports canceled a total of 943 flights due to the typhoon, reducing capacity by nearly 40%, state broadcaster CCTV said.

China Eastern Airlines said on Monday it was trying to resume flights to Shanghai, Zhejiang and other destinations in an "orderly manner."

Many streets in Shanghai's suburban Jiading and Qingpu districts around the city center remained waterlogged, according to live-streams shared by residents on social media. The live videos, not verified by Reuters, showed people wading through knee-



A DRONE VIEW shows a flooded village following heavy rainfall brought by Typhoon Dolphin, in Dajing town, Yueqing, Zhejiang province, China yesterday. (cnsphoto via Reuters)

high murky water.

"It rained almost all night last night. When I woke up this morning, I found the neighborhood flooded, and the streets were severely flooded," said 39-year-old Hou Lina, who works in sales in Jiading in Shanghai.

"I've lived in Shanghai for 10 years, and this is the first time I've experienced such inconvenience from a typhoon. This is the first time I've encountered such widespread flooding," she told Reuters.

In Shanghai's Jinshan, the district authority said non-essential businesses and organi-

zations could temporarily halt operations, classes, outdoor events, and transit services, amid forecasts of continued strong winds and heavy rain on Monday.

Powerful winds and lashing rain flipped over a truck in Zhejiang's Wenzhou, a video posted on TikTok on Sunday showed. It was unclear what happened to the driver.

Authorities warned that 74 rivers in the Taihu Lake basin and the coastal areas of eastern Zhejiang have exceeded warning levels, and that flood risks for small and medium-sized rivers in heavy rainfall areas are high.

The strongest typhoon to hit China this year, Dolphin is forecast to move deeper inland to the central provinces of Hubei and Henan in the coming days while also pushing moisture north.

Authorities in the capital Beijing raised warnings for torrential rain and said the city was prepared to activate its flood control response on Tuesday morning.

Beijing is expected to experience "significant rainfall" from Tuesday until Thursday, with authorities warning of the risk of flash floods in the city and landslides in the surrounding mountainous areas.

How Woody Guthrie was in tune with Judaism

The iconic Dust Bowl folk singer story you've probably never heard is deeply Jewish

• By ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL/JTA

I knew that the folk singer Arlo Guthrie's mom was Jewish in the same way that I knew that jazz great Louis Armstrong spoke some Yiddish. "Guess who's Jewish (even a little)" is the Jewish national pastime.

But I couldn't have guessed how deeply Arlo's father, the legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie, was enmeshed in Jewish culture before seeing *Dust Bowls and Jewish Souls: Another Side of Woody Guthrie*. Steven Pressman's engaging new documentary has just begun its rounds on the Jewish film circuit, with screenings this month in the southern United States.

Best known as the bard of the Dust Bowl, the Oklahoma-born Guthrie gave voice to migrants, laborers, and the dispossessed, and his "This Land Is Your Land" has become something close to an alternative national anthem. His second wife (and Arlo's mom) was born Marjorie Greenblatt, a Martha Graham dancer whose parents were Jewish immigrants from Ukraine. I knew she inspired him to write a few Hanukkah songs and that's about it.

The film, however, makes the case that Guthrie's extended Jewish family was not incidental but integral in his artistic and personal evolution. It is a story that stretches from Oklahoma to Coney Island to the Yiddish literary world, and from the folk revival's Jewish impresarios to one remarkable immigrant woman whose influence has largely gone unrecognized.

That would be Aliza Greenblatt, Marjorie's mother. A doting grandmother known to Arlo and his siblings as "Bubbie," she was a Yiddish poet and lyricist of some renown, and what the Jewish Women's Archive calls "an early, committed leader in Zionist and Jewish women's organizations."

Greenblatt is hardly a household name outside Yiddish cultural circles. Yet Pressman's film suggests that she deserves a place in the Guthrie story alongside Pete Seeger and a young Bob Dylan.

The relationship is striking precisely because it resists stereotypes. As Aaron Lansky, founder of the Yiddish Book Center, puts it in the film, "Some people aren't Jewish. And some people really aren't Jewish. That was Woody Guthrie."

But after moving to New York from California and meeting Marjorie, Guthrie did not merely come to enjoy Jewish food, sprinkle a few Yiddish words into conversation, or pick up a holiday tune. Through Greenblatt, he entered an immigrant



WOODY GUTHRIE and Yiddish poet Aliza Greenblatt. After Guthrie married Greenblatt's daughter, Marjorie Mazia, the two developed a close bond. (Woody Guthrie Publications)



WOODY GUTHRIE performs a concert for the USO and the Jewish Welfare Board in New York City in 1943. (Woody Guthrie Publications)

family steeped in Yiddish language, music, poetry, and left-wing idealism.

Their exchanges, preserved in letters, songs and family memories, show an artist captivated by another people's folk culture because he recognized in it echoes of his own.

Guthrie, after all, grew up poor, and saw his neighbors driven off their land by the economic and environmental disasters of the Great Depression. In teaching Woody about Jewish history, holidays and folklore,

Greenblatt gave him another vocabulary for thinking about exile, injustice, and perseverance – themes that already animated his work.

He found in Jewish culture another vernacular tradition, one built on storytelling, humor, resilience, and moral responsibility.

THE FILM ALSO reminds viewers that Guthrie's Jewish connections extended well beyond his family.

Among the central figures in his career was Moses Asch, founder of

Folkways Records and the son of the celebrated Yiddish novelist Sholem Asch. Without Asch's obsessive commitment to documenting American folk traditions and putting them on shellac and vinyl, much of Guthrie's recorded legacy might never have survived in the form we know today.

Then there was Harold Leventhal, the son of Orthodox Jewish immigrants, who became one of the most influential managers and producers in American folk music. Leventhal helped shape the careers of Guthrie,

Seeger, and later generations of performers, including Arlo, while helping transform folk music from a subculture into a national movement.

The Jewish imprint on the folk revival ran even deeper. Dylan, born Robert Zimmerman to a Minnesota Jewish family, famously reinvented himself after absorbing Guthrie's music.

(In the film, Arlo and his sister Nora tell a charming story about a scruffy Dylan showing up at the family home in Howard Beach, Queens before visiting Woody, by then gravely ill with Huntington's disease, in the hospital.)

Singer Ramblin' Jack Elliott, born Elliott Adnopolz to Jewish parents and raised in Brooklyn, devoted himself to carrying Guthrie's style and repertoire into the next generation.

Taken together, these figures complicate the familiar story of the folk revival. It wasn't only a movement inspired by Appalachian, African-American, cowboy, and rural traditions. It was, in many respects, a conversation that included Jewish intellectuals, producers, performers, and organizers who recognized in American folk music something akin to their own inherited traditions.

In a film that includes several "Who knew?" revelations, perhaps the most startling detail concerns Arlo and his siblings Nora and Joady. Close in age, the three took Hebrew lessons from a young rabbi who would go on to his own version of fame and infamy. (You can look it up, but I won't spoil

it for you here.) Silent home movies show the Guthrie kids taking those lessons, celebrating Shabbat with their grandparents, and gathering around what the family called the "Hanukkah tree."

And no doubt singing Woody's Hanukkah songs, of which he wrote quite a few. The same singer/songwriter of "I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore" also wrote, "Honeyky Hanukah" ("It's Honeyky Hanukah, shaky my hand/ My candles are burning all over this land"). In 2006, The Klezmatics recorded them on the Grammy-winning album "Woody Guthrie's Happy Joyous Hanukkah."

I saw *Dust Bowls and Jewish Souls* on July 27 at a sold-out screening at the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival in Lenox, Massachusetts, in what has become the heart of Guthrie Country. Marjorie first came to the Berkshires to teach dance at Indian Hill Arts Camp in Stockbridge, founded by the musicians and activists Mordecai and Irma Bauman.

Arlo made his home in Berkshire County, and his 1967 hit "Alice's Restaurant" is set in Stockbridge. The family transformed the church where the real-life Alice lived into the Guthrie Center, now a thriving venue for music and social justice programming. It currently features an exhibit on Woody's struggle with Huntington's and Marjorie's efforts to raise awareness about the disease.

Arlo's daughter Annie Guthrie is the executive director of the Guthrie Center, and spoke following the Lenox screening, underscoring how the family's history continues to intersect with Jewish cultural life.

The family carries Woody's name, but as Annie explained, Aliza Greenblatt's legacy looms large. The film features a letter written by Aliza to Arlo on his 13th birthday. Even if those Hebrew lessons didn't take (Arlo explains in the film that he wasn't called on, or able, to do very much at his bar mitzvah), in her letter Greenblatt reminds him of the significance of the day and blesses him with a life of creativity and independence.

Annie recalled that her grandmother Marjorie wrote a similar letter to her brother Avery on the eve of his 13th birthday.

"Now, we didn't grow up Jewish," said Annie, whose mother, the former Jackie Hyde of Salt Lake City, died in 2012. "We were kind of interfaith. But I want to be the grandmother that writes a letter to her grandchild on the eve of their 13th birthday."

Aliza and Marjorie, she said, "continue to inspire me."

Why no one worships Zeus anymore, but Jews still live by the Bible

• By BENJAMIN RESNICK/JTA

The release of filmmaker Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* has sparked renewed interest in the 3,000-year-old poem on which it is based.

It's not difficult to understand why. The movie version is epic in scope, with magnificent cinematography and visual effects, and exceptional performances by an ensemble cast. And, like its source material, it tells a story of universally relevant themes: homecoming, forbearance, fate.

This is why the story of Odysseus's journey back to those he loves has inspired fascination and homage from the likes of James Joyce, the Coen brothers, and now Nolan. It is also why there was a time (if recent archaeological investigations into an ancient Ithacan shrine are accurate) that the king of Ithaca was not only admired as a hero but also worshiped as a god.

I thought a lot about that ruined shrine a few days ago, as I watched Matt Damon, who plays Odysseus in the new adaptation, swing his sword and string his bow from my seat inside a darkened theater in Tel Aviv, Hebrew subtitles flashing across the screen. And as the movie went on, even as I found myself enthralled by the unfolding story, I became increasingly aware of a dual narrative.

There we sat, my wife, my children, and I, watching a story about a homecoming while experiencing one ourselves. I thought about how Odysseus took 20 years to return home and about how the Jews took around 2,000 years. Then I became acutely aware that the theater I was sitting in would not exist, the city I was sleeping in would not exist, and the country that I love would not exist but for the enduring power of another great piece of ancient literature.

Like *The Odyssey*, the Hebrew Bible tells epic stories full of complicated characters. They are in thrall to mysterious visions. They pursue goals and passions that they do not quite understand. There are journeys and betrayals and contorted politics and brushes with the divine.

But, as I watched all the battles and bloody



MATT DAMON (center) as Odysseus in 'The Odyssey.' The Bible's vision for humanity has not fallen into ruin, and it has not been sequestered inside the marble halls of 'great literature,' says the writer. (Melinda Sue Gordon/Universal Pictures/TNS)

machinations race across the screen, I began to reflect on the curious fact that no one on earth still brings offerings to Poseidon, no one who prostrates herself before Aphrodite or Athena, no one who prays to Zeus for mercy.

Meanwhile, those of us who remain devoted to the stories in the Bible still speak its language and sing its songs and bow down where and when it is said. We still read it on an endless loop. We kiss it when it falls. We bury it when it is beyond repair.

Its vision for humanity has not fallen into ruin, and it has not been sequestered inside the marble halls of "great literature." And we build new thriving cities on the very ground it hallowed thousands of years ago.

It is indeed remarkable – and not to be taken for granted – that stories written thousands of years ago, whether in Hebrew or Greek or Sanskrit, can still speak to us and inspire great art. But whereas *The Odyssey* remains an object of fascination, the Bible is

both an object of fascination and of passionate devotion.

It is possible that Helen's face once launched a thousand ships. It is certain the unfinished journey of Abraham still guides billions of lives – the lives of Jews, of course, and many others. Why? What distinguishes the Bible from many other ancient epics, giving it not only the power to inspire but also the power to command?

IN AN IMPORTANT book written in the 1950s, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, Eric Auerbach, a Jewish literary critic from Germany, suggests an answer. Contrasting *The Odyssey* with the Binding of Isaac in Genesis, Auerbach points to the dramatic stylistic divergences between Homeric literature and the Hebrew Bible and their vastly different approaches to representing the world around us.

The former, he points out, includes great detail; it is "Clearly outlined, brightly and

uniformly illuminated, men and things stand out in a realm with everything visible... orderly, even in their ardor, are the feelings and thoughts of the persons involved... The Homeric style knows only a foreground, only a uniformly illuminated, uniformly objective present."

Like Odysseus's journey, the Binding of Isaac is unquestionably one of the greatest stories ever told. However, unlike Odysseus's journey, it unfolds over a mere 19 sparse verses. It does not include elaborate exposition or psychological analysis; instead, it includes yawning silences and lacunae:

"Isaac said to Abraham his father, he said: Father! He said: Here I am, my son. He said: Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering-up? Abraham said: God will see for Himself to the lamb for the offering-up, my son. Thus the two of them went together" (Genesis 22:7-8).

Filled with pathos and almost unbearable tension, this is among the most stirring,

disquieting passages in the history of literature. But where, when, and why is all this happening? What are the characters thinking and feeling? These questions are not answered in the text but are instead left for the reader to contemplate.

The result is a mysterious, halting tale. It is gestural rather than precise, rooted not in the present but in a haunted past that overreaches into an imagined future. This paradoxically allows the Bible to create characters of greater depth and complexity, Auerbach argues.

The Homeric poems, in their specificity, belie the turbid, unknowable aspects of life itself. And the heroes in *The Odyssey*, though ostensibly more complex, are in fact much simpler.

Auerbach, of course, did not attempt to resolve the question that struck me so forcefully a few days ago as I watched *The Odyssey* near Dizengoff Square, namely why all the shrines to Odysseus are in ruins while the world remains full of synagogues.

But in one place he begins to offer a possible answer, observing incisively that the mysterious nature of the stories in the Bible means that "they require subtle investigation and interpretation. Since so much in the story is dark and incomplete, and since the reader knows that God is a hidden God, his effort to interpret it constantly finds something new to feed upon."

Essentially – though he does not use this language – he is saying that, unlike Homeric epics, biblical stories demand midrash to fill in the gaps. They are not written with exhaustive specificity. They are not told to astound, entertain, or beguile.

They are told to be generative and to give their readers a chance to uncover deep truths that the stories themselves only gesture toward. They are not arguments or expositions, but offerings to the imagination. They are odysseys of interpretation, questioning, reading, and endless rereading.

And so they finally attain the immortality for which lesser heroes die searching.

The writer is rabbi of the Pelham Jewish Center in Pelham, New York, and the author of the novel *Next Stop*.

THE JERUSALEM POST

DAILY BRAIN TEASERS



ACROSS

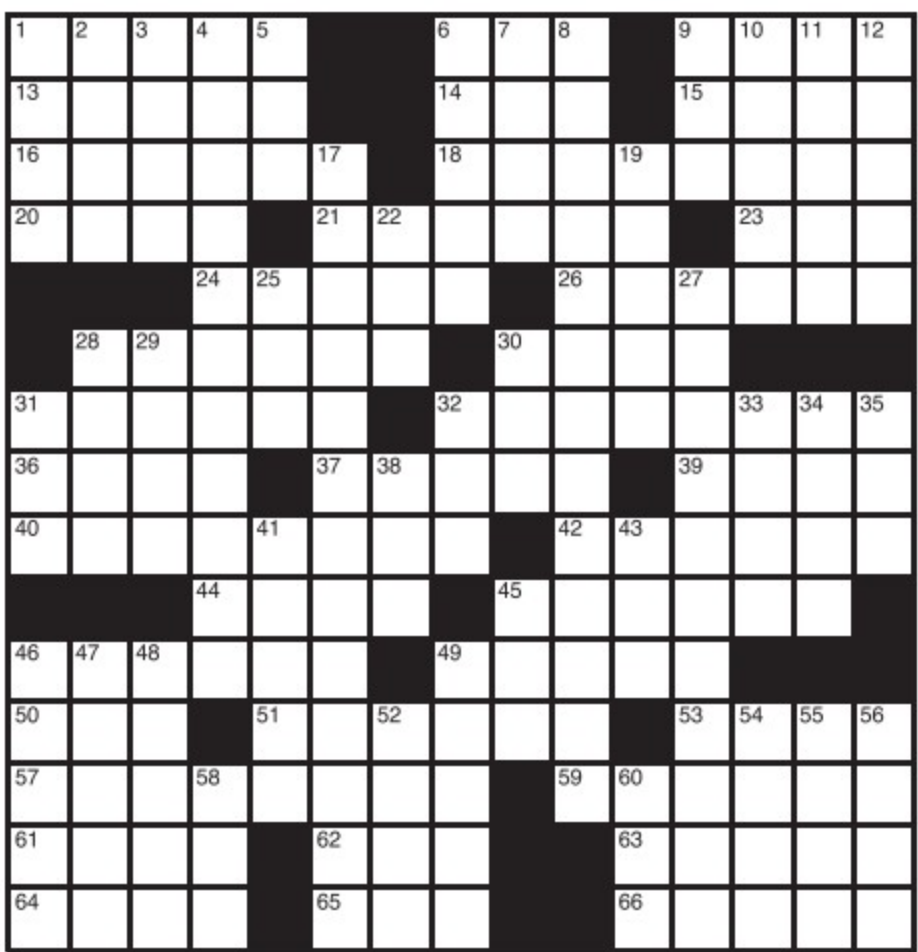
- 1 Colorful violet kin
- 6 Suga and Jung Kook's band
- 9 "___ the Cat": children's book series
- 13 Give a speech
- 14 Atty.'s title
- 15 And others, in a bibliography
- 16 Highly sensitive person
- 18 Kitchen deputy
- 20 Old Russian ruler
- 21 Bothers greatly
- 23 ___-Wan Kenobi
- 24 Thigh muscles, familiarly
- 26 Exposes, in a way
- 28 Treat that may be dipped in dulce de leche
- 30 Indiana University basketball coach
- Moren
- 31 Flexible
- 32 Amusement park time-saver
- 36 Former first lady
- Biden
- 37 Winter migration direction
- 39 Tried's partner
- 40 "Hear me out ..."
- 42 Woodwind section player
- 44 Norse god of thunder
- 45 Two-door cars

DOWN

- 46 Neaten
- 49 Many shelter dogs
- 50 Astonishment
- 51 Soft drink brand with a "lymon" logo
- 53 Creative solution
- 57 Spinning toy
- 59 "Are you serious?"
- 61 "Let It Go" singer
- 62 Genetic transcription molecule
- 63 Thread holder
- 64 Snow day ride
- 65 Daughter's brother
- 66 Canine command akin to "drop it"

ACROSS

- 17 Intensely shocking events
- 19 One end of a maze
- 22 Ruckus
- 25 Spot where there's no trouble brewing?
- 27 Peak physical condition, or a feature of 4-, 8-, and 17-Down
- 28 Advertising award
- 29 Biker's challenge
- 30 Skin art, for short
- 31 Sleepover attire, familiarly
- 32 Enjoyable
- 33 Grammy winner
- India, ___
- 34 Puzzle (out)
- 35 Group of reps at the gym
- 38 Above, in classic odes
- 41 "Be quiet!"
- 43 "Having said that ..."



- 45 Minor injury
- 46 Cassettes
- 47 "Count on me"
- 48 Quite thick
- 49 2026 Winter Olympics host city
- 52 "The Biggest

- Little City in the World"
- 54 Tons
- 55 Drain blockage
- 56 Offspring of Leia and Han
- 58 Crumple (up)
- 60 Course for some intl. students

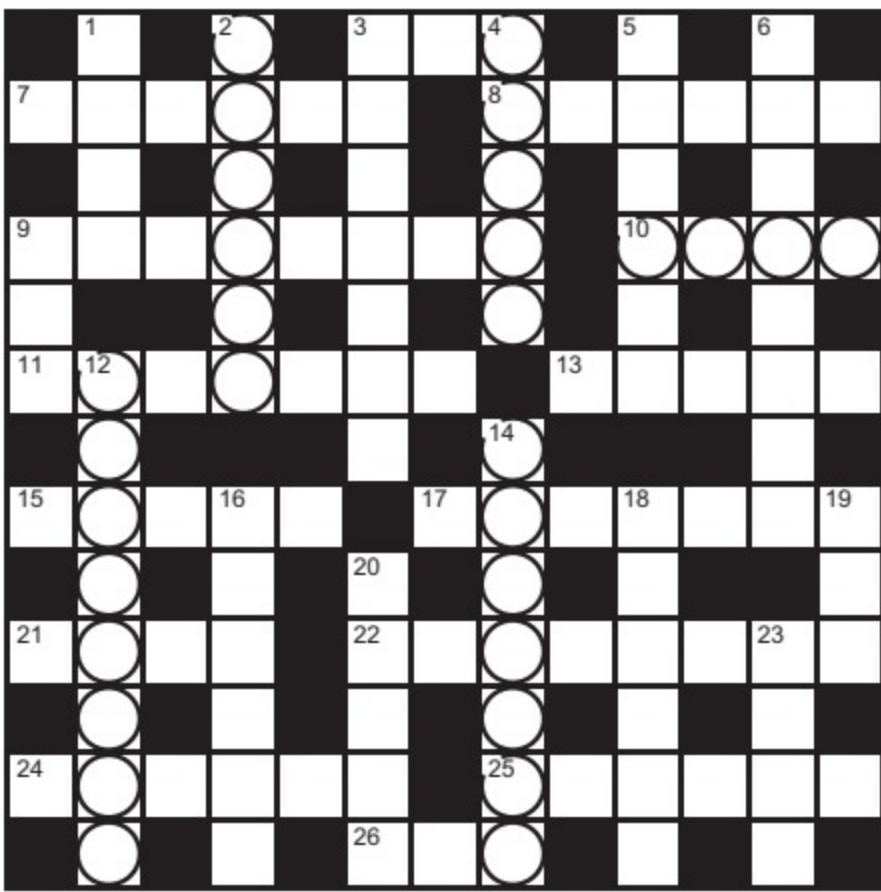
QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

- 3 Feel like a ___ in the machine (3)
- 7 Ruler in a Gilbert and Sullivan title (6)
- 8 "I Got ___" (1930 Gershwin song) (6)
- 9 Kind of grape or watermelon that does not require spitting (8)
- 10 "The Longest ___" (1974 film) (4)
- 11 What folks are doing on Yom Kippur (7)
- 13 French singer ___ Piaf (5)
- 15 Love, in Lyons, Lourdes and Lausanne (5)
- 17 Asexual reproduction (7)
- 21 ___ A Sketch (classic drawing toy) (4)
- 22 Thin and rugged (BEAR DOWN anagram) (8)
- 24 Nut (I ROWED anagram) (6)
- 25 Deodorant on a ball (4-2)
- 26 ___ Moines, Iowa (3)

Down

- 1 Not narrow (4)
- 2 Madison Square ___ (6)
- 3 Cough syrup ingredient (I ENCODE anagram) (7)
- 4 It's always greener in the neighbor's yard (5)
- 5 ___ Skynyrd (Southern rock band) (6)
- 6 Al ___, who was ordained a minister at age 10(8)
- 9 Rejuvenating resort facility (3)
- 12 Plum, cherry and beefsteak (8)



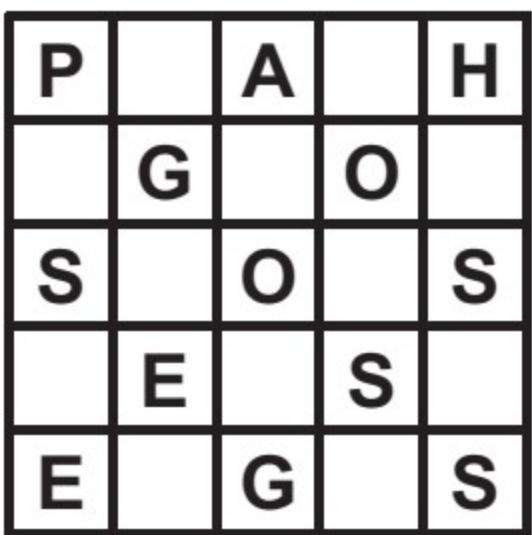
- 14 "___ for Algernon" (1959 Daniel Keyes book) (7)
- 16 Not wounded (6)
- 18 Strip in the kitchen (or in a pool) (6)
- 19 One of Jacob's 12 sons (3)
- 20 Family of offspring (5)
- 23 ___ Musk: CEO of Tesla Motors (4)



CRYPTIC SOLUTION



5x5
Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.



6144



PREVIOUS SOLUTION
(other combinations may be possible)

© THE PUZZLE COMPANY

Reference: Concise Oxford 10th Edition

su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom
VERY EASY



WORD-BUILDER

6184



How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

TODAY'S GOALS:

Good - 8 Excellent - 10 Amazing - 13

SOLUTION 6183: deli, die, diel, dire, eld, ide, idle, idler, ire, led, lei, tid, lie, lied, lire, red, rid, ride, riel, rile, riled.

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*Subject to the terms of the promotion | E&OE

PROGRAMS

KAN HD (Y/H11)

06:04 This Morning - with Arieh Golan
08:00 Kalman Liberman
10:00 Kubanovick
12:00 News Flash
12:05 Are We Ready for Net Zero? - Episode 2
13:00 Innovation Nation - Episode 6
13:23 Garlic, Pepper & Olive Oil - Elita Ofek
14:05 Dreams of Freedom - Episode 13
15:00 Glick and Tamar
17:00 The World Today - with Michal Reshef and
17:55 Kan at Six - with Maya Rachlin
19:00 Kan News + with Sharon Davidovitch
19:15 The Hive - Episode 11
19:50 Kan News Edition
21:30 Come Dine With Me 10 - Eliat Week 3
22:02 Black Gold - Episode 4
22:50 Night News - with Sharon Davidovitch
23:20 The Hive - Episode 9
23:50 When Will We Fall in Love? - Episode 2

KESKET HD (Y/H12)

06:00 News Flash
06:10 The Morning Headlines
07:00 News Flash
07:08 The Morning News - With Niv Raskin
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Morning News - With Nesli and Yoav
11:00 Married at First Sight
12:25 Savri Maranan 8 - The Family Gathering
13:00 12 PM
15:00 Today's edition - With Amalya Duek and O
16:55 Five With - Rafi Reshef
17:55 6:00 P.M with...
19:00 Seven PM with... Keren Marciano
19:50 Main Edition
21:00 Married at First Sight
23:00 Guy Pines
23:35 Avri and Sherki

RESHET HD (Y/H13)

06:00 This Morning - Preview
07:00 This Morning - Omer Yardeni and Rotem Isra
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
10:00 News Flash
10:05 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
11:00 News Flash
11:05 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
12:00 News Flash
12:05 Stethoscope - Episode 334
12:50 The Voice Israel 6 - Episode 12
13:00 News Flash
13:05 The Voice Israel 6 - Episode 12
14:00 News Flash
14:05 The Daily Report
15:00 Today's News - Eli Rachlin
16:55 Today's Talk - With Lucy Aharish
17:55 Moriya & Berko
18:59 Election Zone - Raviv Druker
19:50 The Main News Edition
21:15 The Voice Israel 6 - Episode 13
23:00 The Tube - Guy Lerer
23:30 The Past Day - With Tal Shorer
00:00 Behind the Money - Eric Weiss

HOT CHANNEL 3 (H3)

08:00 The Five Star Weekend
08:41 A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story
09:31 Wild Cards 3
10:16 Leonard and Hungry Paul
10:45 The Five Star Weekend
11:26 A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story
12:15 The Heart Guy 2
13:05 Leonard and Hungry Paul
13:34 Wild Cards 3
14:19 Little House on the Prairie 2
15:06 Days of Our Lives
15:48 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 47
16:27 The Bold and The Beautiful (2 eps)
17:14 Days of Our Lives
17:53 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 47
18:32 Little House on the Prairie 2
19:19 Judge Judy 20
19:41 Connected 8
20:06 Connected 8
20:32 Two Weeks in August
21:16 The Heart Guy 3
22:07 American Dad 21
22:30 Matlock
23:14 Metumetem 3
23:54 Wild Cards 3
00:38 Two Weeks in August

HOT ISRAELI ENTERTAINMENT

06:00 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00
08:00 Nasrin 3
08:27 The Game of Life
09:14 Michaela
10:00 Bat El the Virgin
10:28 Pushers
10:56 The Bloggers
11:20 Nasrin 3
11:47 The Game of Life
12:36 Michaela
13:22 Connected 12
13:45 My Sister Jackie 2
14:09 Pushers
14:40 The Game of Life
15:25 Michaela
16:13 Nasrin 3
16:41 Connected 12
17:05 The Game of Life
17:50 Michaela
18:40 My Sister Jackie 2
19:05 Nasrin 3
19:35 Connected 12
21:04 The Game of Life
20:49 Michaela
21:35 Bat El the Virgin
21:59 Nasrin 3
22:26 Connected 12
22:52 The Game of Life
23:37 Michaela
00:24 Nasrin 3
00:51 Bat El the Virgin
01:16 Hezi & Sons
01:47 My Sister Jackie 2
02:16 I BUTTERFLY
02:37 The Bloggers
03:01 Full Moon
03:27 My Sister Jackie 2
03:52 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00

HOT ZONE (H5)

07:10 NCIS 23
07:52 Law & Order 25
08:33 Chicago PD 11
08:50 Boston Blue
09:57 Law & Order: SVU 27
10:39 NCIS 23
11:21 Law & Order 25
12:02 NCIS: Sydney
12:47 CIA

13:29 Chicago PD 11
14:10 Boston Blue
14:53 Law & Order: SVU 27
15:35 Law & Order 25
16:17 NCIS: Sydney
17:02 Chicago PD 11
17:44 NCIS 23
18:26 Boston Blue
19:09 Law & Order: SVU 27
19:51 NCIS: Sydney
20:36 CIA
21:18 Law & Order 25
22:00 Boston Blue
22:43 Chicago PD 11
23:25 NCIS 23

YES TV DRAMA

07:00 Sister Boniface 2
07:50 Friday Night Lights 5
08:39 Our House
09:32 Suits 5
10:21 Yes Man
10:54 Sister Boniface 2
11:44 A Woman Of Substance
12:33 Friday Night Lights 5
13:22 Yes Man
13:55 Suits 5
14:44 Sister Boniface 2
15:38 Our House
16:31 Suits 5
17:20 Friday Night Lights 5
18:09 He Had It Coming
18:39 Yes Man
19:12 Our House
20:38 A Woman Of Substance
21:00 Bodeket House
21:35 American Classic
22:15 Fellow Travelers
23:12 For Her Sins
00:35 Hatabach 2
01:09 Tip Toe
01:56 Fellow Travelers
02:54 The Sixth Commandment

YES TV ACTION

06:09 Ncis 22
06:54 Law & Order (2022) 23
07:39 Law & Order (2022) 24
08:24 9-1-1 Season 8
09:09 Chicago Fire 12
09:54 Chicago Fire 12
10:39 Prisoner
11:27 Cia
12:12 Ncis 22
12:57 Law & Order (2022) 23
13:42 Law & Order (2022) 24
14:27 Chicago Fire 12
15:12 Chicago Fire 12
15:57 Prisoner
16:45 Cia
17:30 Ncis 22
18:15 Law & Order (2022) 24
19:00 Law & Order (2022) 24
19:45 9-1-1 Season 8
20:30 Chicago Fire 12
21:15 Chicago Fire 12
22:00 After The Flood 2
22:50 Kabul
23:45 Paris Has Fallen
24:31 Taagad 2
00:16 Taagad 2
01:34 Paris Has Fallen
02:22 Taagad 2
02:57 Taagad 2

YES TV COMEDY

06:45 St. Denis Medical
07:10 St. Denis Medical
07:35 Community
08:00 Community 2
08:25 Habuzaglos 8
09:00 Habuzaglos 9
09:35 Brooklyn 99
10:00 Brooklyn 99
10:25 That 70's Show 3
10:50 That 70's Show 3
11:15 Married With Children 3
11:40 Married With Children 3
12:05 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
12:35 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
12:55 The Office 8
13:20 The Office 8
13:45 St. Denis Medical
14:10 St. Denis Medical
14:35 Community
15:00 Community 2
15:25 Habuzaglos 8
16:00 Habuzaglos 9
16:35 Brooklyn 99
17:00 Brooklyn 99
17:25 That 70's Show 3
17:50 That 70's Show 3
18:15 Married With Children 3
18:40 Married With Children 3
19:05 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
19:30 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
19:55 The Office 8
20:20 The Office 8
20:45 Brooklyn 99
21:10 Brooklyn 99
21:35 That 70's Show 3
22:00 That 70's Show 3
22:25 Married With Children 3
22:50 Married With Children 3
23:15 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
23:40 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
20:20 The Office 8
20:45 St. Denis Medical
01:10 St. Denis Medical
01:35 Community
02:00 Community 2

MIDDLE EAST TV (Y109/H150)

11:30 The 700 Club
12:30 It's Supernatural
13:00 ISN Mentoring Programming
14:00 Your Path to Destiny
14:30 Discovering the Prophetic
15:00 Thunder in the City
16:30 Growing in Glory
17:00 Identity Shift
17:30 Ginger Ziegler
18:00 Flavors Of Israel
18:30 It's Supernatural
19:00 The 700 Club
20:00 Classic Sitcom Block
20:30 Classic Sitcom Block
21:00 It's Supernatural
21:30 Israel Daily
22:00 One America News Network
23:00 Manna Fest with Perry Stone
23:30 Destiny Moments
00:00 ILTV Weekly Review
00:30 Thunder in the City

HISTORY (Y37/H43)

06:05 Yitzhak Rabin: A Personal Point Of View
06:52 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 1
07:32 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 13
08:13 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 5
08:56 Life After People 3 - Ep. 7
09:37 History's Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
10:18 Mysteries Unearthed With Danny Trejo 2 -
10:59 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 18
11:39 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 1
12:19 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 13
13:01 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 5
13:43 Life After People 3 - Ep. 7
14:24 History's Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
15:05 Mysteries Unearthed With Danny Trejo 2 -
15:46 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 18
16:27 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 1
17:07 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 13
17:48 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 5
18:30 Life After People 3 - Ep. 8
19:11 History's Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
19:52 The Fast History of - Ep. 8
20:12 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 19
20:53 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 2
21:33 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 14

22:15 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 6
22:56 Life After People 3 - Ep. 8
23:36 History's Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
00:40 Mysteries Unearthed With Danny Trejo 2 -
01:21 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 18
02:01 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 1
02:41 Nirim-Dangur: The Longest Day
03:01 Clip Time - Ep. 2
03:31 Clip Time - Ep. 3
04:02 Clip Time - Ep. 4
04:32 Clip Time - Ep. 5

CLASSICA HD

06:25 Classica Spotlight
07:00 Mozart: String Quartet No. 14
07:32 Tchaikovsky: Romeo and Juliet (Alphen)
07:54 Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2
08:56 Solos for Clarinet, Part I
09:22 In Rehearsal
10:17 Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 32, Op. 111
10:44 Classica Spotlight
11:05 Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2 (Rattle)
12:08 Duets: Mozart, Ravel, Rachmaninoff et al
13:37 Behind the Scenes: Zurich
14:00 Opera House
14:31 Brahms: Clarinet Sonata No. 2, Op. 120
14:52 Ravel: Bolero (Perruchon)
15:08 Jenkins: The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace
16:18 Mahler: Symphony No. 2 (2003)
17:44 Mahler: Symphony No. 4 (1951) Semi-final: Beethoven and Liszt
19:16 Brahms: Symphony No. 2 (2015)
19:58 Abbado: Mahler and Schenker
21:41 Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 (2021)
22:01 Handel: The Triumph of Time and Truth
01:00 Dvorak: Rusalka (Baleff)
03:01 Waldbuhne 2004: Tchaikovsky Night
04:39 Modena - City of Belcanto

YES DOCU (Y8)

08:05 The Trials of Alan Dershowitz Alan Dershowitz is a fierce criminal defense attorney known for representing infamous clients like Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein The film explores his notable victories and lesser-known losses. Dir. John Curtin, Xinyan Yu.
09:50 Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep. 2 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023
10:35 Made in Ethiopia When a massive Chinese industrial park lands in rural Ethiopia, a dusty farming town finds itself at the new frontier of globalization. Dir. Max Duncan, Xinyan Yu.
10:45 Canada, Ethiopia, UK, USA. 2024
12:10 The Matrix: Generation The Matrix saga was born in 1999 and quickly became a pop-culture phenomenon. Its prophetic aspects will be at the heart of this unprecedented documentary. Dir. Benjamin Clavel. France. 2023
13:05 Menendez + Menudo... Ep. 2 "Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed". The true story of the two brothers, Lyle and Eric Menendez, who brutally killed their parents in Beverly Hills in 1989 and another victim in the case, who speaks for the first time. 2024
14:05 A Case of a Lifetime - 1 (part 2) The double murder affair that shook Israel! Shmuel Bleichman informed the police that his mother and sister had disappeared. In the interrogation, the son testified, and his father was convicted. Dir.Nili Tal. 2018.
15:00 Alive: The Andes Plane Disaster - 1 When a rugby team's plane crashed in the Andes Mountains in October 1972, they were left with little hope of rescue. They faced an impossible situation: eat frozen dead bodies of their friends or die of starvation. 2023
15:45 The Dayan Dynasty - 2 Documentary series that sits for the first time in front of the camera the descendants of the tribe of Dayan who tell of the ups and downs the family has known throughout the generations. Dir. Anat Goren. Israel, 2019.
16:35 Nathan-Isrl For 70 years, Nathan Hili has been unable to stop drawing. His mind is still flooded with memories from the days when he was assigned to guard top Nazi war criminals at the Nuremberg trials. Dir. Elan Golan. 2023
17:55 Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep. 3 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023
18:40 Twin Life: Sharing Mind And Body A year in the life of the astonishing Hogan cranioapog twins. Doctors suspect they both feel and see the same things. Their family even believes they can taste what the other tastes. Dir. Judith Pyke. Canada, 2014.
19:25 The Fall The story of Mary Decker and Zola Budd and their lives building up to the infamous 1984 Olympics 3000M race in which both of them collide. Dir. Daniel Gordon. UK. 2016.
21:00 The Dayan Dynasty - 3 Documentary series that sits for the first time in front of the camera the descendants of the tribe of Dayan who tell of the ups and downs the family has known throughout the generations. Dir. Anat Goren. Israel, 2019.
22:00 Menendez + Menudo... Ep. 3 "Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed". The true story of the two brothers, Lyle and Eric Menendez, who brutally killed their parents in Beverly Hills in 1989 and another victim in the case, who speaks for the first time. 2024
23:00 A Case of a Lifetime - 2 The historic murder of Judge Adi Azar in 2004 interrupted the detectives, and take them to the case of their lives. Dir. Nili Tal. 2018.
23:50 Alive: The Andes Plane Disaster - 2 When a rugby team's plane crashed in the Andes Mountains in October 1972, they were left with little hope of

rescue. They faced an impossible situation: eat frozen dead bodies of their friends or die of starvation. 2023

CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06:02 Zuckerberg: King of the Metaverse
07:34 Who Murdered Tair Rada?
08:20 To Kill a Dictator
09:15 Islands: Nature's Wild Laboratories
10:00 Murky Skies
10:50 PRINCE WILLIAM: A LIFE IN PICTURES
11:40 Zuckerberg: King of the Metaverse
13:15 To Kill a Dictator
14:10 Islands: Nature's Wild Laboratories
14:55 Murky Skies
15:46 Zuckerberg: King of the Metaverse
17:17 To Kill a Dictator
18:10 Murky Skies
18:59 Zuckerberg: King of the Metaverse
20:30 Islands: Nature's Wild Laboratories
21:15 Rise and Kill
22:05 I'm Cheve Chase and Your'e not
23:45 Who Murdered Tair Rada?
01:30 Rise and Kill
01:10 I'm Cheve Chase and Your'e not
02:49 Who Murdered Tair Rada?
03:27 Rise and Kill

MEZZO FULL (H195)

10:52 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from jazz to Classical music.
11:00 Rameau: Les Fetes d'Hebe Opera in 3 acts. Les Arts Florissants led by William Christie. Lisandro Abadie (Eurilas-Alcee), Marc Maullon (Mercure-Mosmus). Opera Comique, Paris, 2024.
13:37 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from jazz to Classical music.
14:00 Klaus Makela: Sibelius, Mozart Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Nederlands Kamerkoor led by Klaus Makela perform Sibelius's Symphony No. 4 and Mozart's Requiem, KV 626. Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, 2022.
15:28 Mahler: Symphony No. 9 - Jonathan Nott Orchestre de la Suisse Romande led by Jonathan Nott performs Gustav Mahler's symphony No. 9 in D major. Victoria Hall, Geneva, 2023
16:55 Nielsen: Symphony No. 5 (Luis) Danish National Symphony Orchestra led by Fabio Luisi performs Carl Nielsen's Symphony No. 5, Op. 50. DR Koncerthuset, Copenhagen, 2023.
18:16 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from jazz to Classical music.
18:35 Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau: Last Words Documentary. A deep insight into the extraordinary artistic life of one of the most famous and prolific lieder singers of our time. Dir.: Bruno Monsiegeon. 2013.
19:28 Harry Christophers: Haydn, The Creation The London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Harry Christophers (conductor), Simon Halsey (chorus director), Lucy Crowe (soprano), Andrew Staples (tenor), Roderick Williams (baritone). London, 2022.
21:30 Dance: Creature - Akram Khan. Creature by choreographer Akram Khan performed by the English National Ballet. Jeffrey Cirio (creature), Erima Takahashi (Marie), Stina Quagebeur (Doctor), Ken Saruhashi (Captain), and others. 2021.
22:57 Claudio Abbado: Brahms Berliner Philharmoniker, Eric Ericson Chamber Choir, Bryn Terfel (bass), Barbara Bonney (soprano) led by Claudio Abbado performs Brahms's Ein Deutsches Requiem. Musikverein, Vienna, 1997.
00:17 Dalbavie: Melancolie de la resistance Opera, Staatskapelle Berlin led by Marie Jacquot. Matthias Klink (Georges Esther), Tanja Ariane Baumgartner (Angele Esther), Sandrine Piau (Rosi Pfiaum), Philippe Jaroussky (Valouchka). Berlin, 2024.
02:39 Glass: Another Look at Harmony Les Metaboles and Aaron Hereaue (organ) led by Leo Warynski perform Philip Glass's Another Look at Harmony, Part 4, and Andrea Basili's Canon ad unisonum. Philharmonie, Paris, 2025.
03:38 Ensemble Intercontemporain Plays Negro Roberto Negro (piano), Michele Rabbia (percussions), Nicolas Crosse (double bass) perform Roberto Negro's "Newborn, for trio and ensemble." La Filature, Mulhouse, 2022.
04:38 Mahler: Symphony No. 5 - Jonathan Nott Classical concert. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and Jonathan Nott (conductor) performing Mahler's symphony no. 5 in C sharp minor. Victoria Hall, Geneva, 2022.
05:54 Quatuor Arod: Mozart, Beethoven, Debussy Quatuor Arod perform Mozart's String Quartet No. 19 in C major Op. 10, No. 6, KV. 465, Beethoven's String Quartet No. 11 in F minor Op. 95, and Debussy's String quartet in G minor Op. 10. Paris 2022.

HOT CHANNEL 3 (H18)

06:31 My Spy: The Eternal City Action. Jf, a veteran CIA agent, reunites with his protege Sophie, in order to prevent a catastrophic nuclear scheme threatening Vatican City. Cast: Dave Batista. Dir.: Peter Segal (USA, 2024).
08:24 The American President Romantic comedy. A widowed US Democratic president and a lobbyist fall in love while the media looks on. With Annette Bening, Michael Douglas. Dir.: Rob Reiner (1995)
10:15 Bird on a Wire Comedy Action. A state witness who blew a drug deal has lived under a false identity for 15 years. One day he meets a lover from his past. Cast: Goldie Hawn, Mel Gibson. Dir.: John Badham (USA, 1990).
12:06 Skiptrace A detective from Hong Kong teams up with an American gambler to battle against a notorious Chinese criminal. WithJackie Chan, Johnny Knoxville (US-China, 2016)
13:53 Burn after Reading A disk containing the memoirs of a CIA agent ends up in the hands of two unscrupulous gym employees who attempt to sell it. With George Clooney, Frances McDormand, Brad Pitt. Dir.: Ethan and Joel Coen. (2008).
15:29 Men in Black Two men who keep an eye on aliens in New York must try to save the world after the aliens threaten to blow it up. WithTommy Lee Jones, Will Smith, Vincent D'Onofrio (1997)
17:08 Love Happens A widower whose book about coping with loss turns him into a self-help guru falls for a florist, only to learn he hasn't truly confronted his wife's death. With: Aaron Eckhart, Jennifer Aniston (2009)
18:57 Failure to Launch A 30something slacker suspects his parents of setting him up with a

MOVIES

HOT CHANNEL 1 (H16)

07:22 Justice League (2017) Bruce Wayne enlists the help of his new-found ally, Diana Prince, to face an even greater enemy. Cast: Ben Affleck, Henry Cavill. Dir.: Zack Snyder (USA, 2017).
09:22 Eat Pray Love A woman realizes how unhappy her marriage is and that her life needs a new direction. After a divorce, she goes on a round-the-world journey to find herself. With Julia Roberts, Javier Bardem (2010).
11:41 Hypnotic Thriller. A detective investigates a mystery involving his missing daughter and a secret government program. Cast: Ben Affleck. Dir.: Robert Rodriguez (USA, 2023).
13:15 Non Stop An air marshal springs into action during a flight after receiving text messages that put his fellow passengers at risk. Cast: Liam Neeson, Julianne Moore. Dir.: Jaume Collet-Serra (USA, 2014).
15:01 Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship... Fantasy. A young

dream girl so he'll finally move out of their home. With Matthew McConaughey, Sarah Jessica Parker (2006).
20:34 The Closet The accountant in a factory is about to be fired. Suddenly, a rumor spreads that he's gay, and the management is afraid they'll be sued for sexual discrimination.. With Daniel Auteuil (2001).
22:00 Wedding Crashers Two friends who crash weddings to hit on bridesmaids, get in trouble when one of them falls for the daughter of a politician. With Vince Vaughn, Owen Wilson (2005)
23:57 Beautiful Disaster Drama. College freshman, Abby, tries to distance herself from her dark past while resisting her attraction to bad boy, Travis. Cast: Virginia Gardner. Dir.: Roger Kumble (USA, 2023).
01:31 Mermaids Drama. A mother and her two daughters move to New Haven. The mother meets a show salesman and the elder daughter falls in love. Cast: Cher, Winona Ryder. Dir.: Richard Benjamin (USA, 1990).

HOT CINEMA 4 (H19)

06:34 American Pastoral A college star and his beauty queen wife watch their seemingly perfect life fall apart, as their daughter joins the turmoil of 1960s America. With Ewan McGregor, Jennifer Connelly (2016)
08:22 Winter Spring Summer or Fall Drama. Two teenagers meet in the winter of their senior year and spend four days together that will change their lives forever. Cast: Jenna Ortega, Percy Hynes White. Dir.: Tiffany Paulsen (USA, 2024)
10:00 Under the Stars Drama. Follows a novelist stuck in a passionless relationship. When he travels to Italy, he finds the girl of his dreams. Cast: Alex Pettyfer, Toni Collette. Dir.: Michelle Danner (USA, 2025).
11:39 Tenor Drama. Stunned by the young man's raw talent, Mrs. Loysseau introduces Antoine to the world of opera. Cast: Michele Laroque. Dir.: Claude Zidi (France, 2022).
13:20 Ben is Back Drama. A drug addicted teenage boy shows up unexpectedly at his family's home on Christmas Eve. Cast: Julia Roberts, Lucas Hedges. Dir.: Peter Hedges (USA, 2018).
15:04 Nowhere Special Drama. Given only a few months to live, John, a 35-year-old window cleaner, attempts to find a new, perfect family for his 3-year-old son. Cast: James Norton. Dir.: Umberto Pasolini (Italy, 2020).
16:40 The Salt Path Drama. A couple lose their home and discover the husband has been diagnosed with a terminal illness as they embark on a year long coastal trek. Cast: Gillian Anderson. Dir.: Marianne Elliott (UK, 2020).
18:35 Young Adult Comedy. Soon after her divorce, a fiction writer returns home to small-town Minnesota to rekindle a romance with her ex-boyfriend. With Charlize Theron, Patrick Wilson (2011)
20:10 September of Shiraz Thriller. A prosperous Jewish family in Iran must abandon everything before they are consumed by the passions of revolutionaries. Cast: Adrien Brody, Salma Hayek. Dir.: Wayne Blair (USA, 2016).
22:00 Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom Drama. An aspiring singer living with his grandmother in the capital of Bhutan dreams of getting a visa to move to Australia. Cast: Sherab Dorji. Dir.: Pawo Choyning Dorji (Bhutan, 2019).
23:48 After the Hunt Drama. A college professor finds herself at a crossroads when a star pupil levels an accusation against one of her colleagues. Cast: Julia Roberts, Ayo Edebiri. Dir.: Luca Guadagnino (USA, 2024).
02:03 Fifty Shades of Grey Drama. The life of a literature student changes when she meets a mysterious billionaire. With Dakota Johnson, Jamie Dornan (2015)

HOT CHANNEL 2 (H17)

06:04 3 Days To Kill A dying CIA agent trying to reconnect with his daughter is offered an experimental drug that could save his life in exchange for one last assignment. Cast: Kevin Costner. Dir.: McG (USA, 2014).
08:00 A Day to Die Action. Connor Connolly is forced to ask his old military ops crew to get him two million dollars before he loses everyone he loves. Cast: Bruce Willis, Kevin Dillon. Dir.: Wes Miller (USA, 2022).
09:45 Quicksand Thriller. A married couple on the verge of divorce is trapped in quicksand while hiking through a rainforest in Colombia. Cast: Carolina Gaiatar, Allan Hawco. Dir.: Andres Beltran (Colombia, 2023).
11:12 88 Minutes A forensic psychiatrist's life is threatened because he was responsible for the capture of a serial killer. With Al Pacino, Leellee Sobieski. (2007).
12:59 Summit Fever Drama. A daring dream to scale the world's most challenging trio of mountains soon turns into a terrifying nightmare. Cast: Ryan Phillippe, Freddie Thorp. Dir.: Julian Gilbey (UK, 2022).
14:54 Conan A remake to the successful film about Conan, a legendary warrior who seeks revenge on a barbaric leader that had destroyed his village. Cast: Ron Perlman. Dir: Marcus Nispel. (USA

Aner Shapiro's creative legacy inspires Israel Festival hackathon

• By HANNAH BROWN

Aner Shapiro, the Jerusalem artist and musician who was killed while saving others on Oct. 7, will be honored at the Israel Festival with an unusual event aimed not simply at celebrating creativity, but at putting it to work. The "Creators of Impact" hackathon, to be held Wednesday as part of the festival's two-day VERSE program, will have 10 artists working in different disciplines and 10 nonprofit organizations to develop new artistic projects designed to address social problems.

The event is being organized by the Israel Festival, the Aner Shapiro Association (also known as the Aner Foundation), and JDC-Israel.

VERSE, taking place August 11-12 at the Jerusalem Campus of the Arts, is a meeting point between artistic creation and social activism. The festival calls art driven by "radical compassion," bringing together artists and activists who see creativity as a way to listen to different voices, connect communities, and encourage change.

That philosophy reflects Shapiro's own life. A multitasking Jerusalem artist, composer, writer, and singer, he believed in the ability of music and art to unite and heal. On October 7, 2023, he was at the Nova festival and took shelter with others in a roadside shelter near Re'im.

When terrorists threw grenades, Shapiro threw them back out until he was killed at the age of 22. The association established in his name continues his belief in using art as a means of repairing the world.

The invitation-only hack-



A MULTITALENTED Jerusalem artist, composer, writer, and singer, Aner Shapiro believed in the ability of music and art to unite and heal. (Courtesy the Israel Festival and the Aner Shapiro Association)

athon begins at 12:30 p.m. on Aug. 12. Artists and representatives from the organizations will work on social challenges. Their goal is to develop artwork ideas that can tell stories, stimulate discussion, and inspire action. A jury will select one proposed work to receive funding for its realization.

The organizations reflect an unusually broad range of issues. They include Otot, for at-risk youth; I-School, online educational opportunities for students from disadvantaged areas and those affected by the war; ASSAF, which assists refugees and asylum seekers; and Blendar, which promotes Jewish-Arab connections through Arabic and cultural education.

Among the others are a Sak-

nin organization providing care for people with disabilities; Kanfey Dror, which combats social exclusion; Home Base, which works with homeless people through sports and community rehabilitation; Machshava Tova, which seeks to reduce social disparities through access to technology; the Council of Youth Movements in Israel; and Ruach Oz, which helps wounded soldiers navigate rehabilitation.

The artists were chosen in part because of their previous engagement with socially oriented art and their experience taking projects from conception through public presentation. They represent disciplines including visual art, poetry, choreography, music, street art,

performance, sound, and film.

Among them are multidisciplinary artist Shani Avivi, whose work explores memory, home, community, and personal archives; poet and choreographer Efrat Nachma; theater creator and actress Ofri Fuchs; participatory artist and designer Shmulik Twig; musician and rapper Yitzhak Vodaj; multidisciplinary performer Uri Duvdevani; and performance artist Mohammed Abu Sarah.

VERSE extends the same idea of art as a vehicle for connection throughout its two days, with music, film, exhibitions, participatory art, and discussions. Performers include Ninet Tayeb with Berry Sakharof, Ehud Banai, Pele Ozen with Hasan MC, and Orit Tashoma.

Also on August 12, a special edition of Jerusalem Story will be held, the storytelling project and podcast devoted to highlighting the city's diverse communities. Six Jerusalemites will tell personal stories representing different backgrounds, neighborhoods, religions, and traditions in an evening hosted by Mishy Harman and featuring music by Rona Kenan.

Taken together, the events make VERSE less a conventional tribute to Shapiro than an attempt to continue his legacy and life. He was motivated by the wish both to help and inspire others through his creativity and his belief that art can do more than reflect the society around it – that it can also help change it.

A tale of growth and corruption

'Las Azules' Season 2 starts tomorrow

• By HANNA RANTALA

LONDON (Reuters) – Mexico's first female police force returns to action in the second season of *Las Azules* (*Women in Blue*), with a storyline woven around two massacres of student protesters that helped define an era of heavy-handed state repression.

The Spanish-language Apple TV series centers on four women in pursuit of personal growth and social change in patriarchal Mexico of the 1970s.

The sophomore season opens a day after a paramilitary force known as Los Halcones attacked a student protest in Mexico City in June 1971, killing or wounding dozens of demonstrators.

When a young man is found dead in murky circumstances, the four "Azules" indirectly take the lead in an investigation that points to the police force and ties back to the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, in which dozens of leftist student protesters were gunned down by the army shortly before Mexico hosted the Olympics.

"The investigation is going to delve deeply into the subject, not just the institution of the police force itself, but also the 1971 student massacre, bringing all of that back into the present to see what was behind it all; what wasn't seen, what wasn't said, what wasn't resolved, because the killings continue, and people are still disappearing in Mexico," said Bárbara Mori, who plays María, now promoted to

lieutenant.

"It's a pretty intense season; just talking about it gives me goosebumps."

The show's co-creator, writer, director, and executive producer Fernando Rovzar wanted to tell a gritty crime story with a touch of traditional Mexican melodrama that exposes wrongdoing in the establishment. A lot of research went into ensuring the events were portrayed with honesty, responsibility, and respect, he said.

"One of the things I love about Mexico is that it's one big gray area. I think this season was an opportunity to really test the moral compass of the four 'Azules,'" said Rovzar.

"Do they defend the system that they know is wrong, or do they defend their own principles, even though they have to go against the system?"

The eight-episode season shows the foursome navigating new territory on and off duty, said Ximena Sariñana, who plays Ángeles, with "all going through transitions, trying to adapt to what the expectation is of a woman in their specific situation."

Season two starts streaming on August 12, with one episode released weekly through September 30, and Rovzar is ready to carry on.

"There are so many stories we can still tackle, issues from the past that are also relevant today that we can continue to take on," he said.

"The pen's in my hand, and I'm ready for another one."

Ryan Murphy's 'Shards' recreates 1981 LA as land of sun, serial killers

• By ELOISE ROLLINS-FIFE

LOS ANGELES – In the opening scene of *The Shards*, a teenage Bret Easton Ellis (Igby Rigney) cruises down Mulholland Drive in his black Mercedes-Benz, cigarette in hand, blasting the Cars' "Moving in Stereo," to catch a Saturday matinee of *The Shining*.

Not only does the sequence evoke the eerie opening of Stanley Kubrick's seminal 1980 horror masterpiece, it transports the viewer into a hyperspecific world – sunshine and cigarettes, prep schools and predators, where turning 17 means receiving a slick car from absentee parents. We're entering Los Angeles, circa 1981, and just like the Overlook Hotel, danger lurks beneath a glamorous facade.

Ryan Murphy's 1980s coming-of-age thriller, which premiered last week on Disney+, is based on the 2023 novel of the same name by LA literary provocateur Bret Easton Ellis, of "*Less Than Zero*" and "*American Psycho*" fame. Ellis fictionalized his Buckley School years for the novel, originally released as a serialized audiobook on his podcast.

Fans of the novel will be relieved to know that the show retains this autobiographical sensibility, filtering its depiction of early '80s LA through the prism of Ellis's memory – as interpreted by series co-creator Murphy, whose stylish fingerprints are all over the screen.

That means perfectly coiffed hair, stark white interiors with pops of color, and, despite the era's prevalent greenery, no extraneous plants.

"If you put all those ferns in, it might give the impression that people didn't have very much taste," explained *The Shards* production designer Cat Smith. "There's a sense of glamour to everything that

[Murphy] does, and a high style."

Smith, who grew up in the Valley in the 1980s and attended the private Marlborough School, reflected on her own memories of the era to bring the show to life. But more than anything, Paul Schrader's 1980 neo-noir thriller *American Gigolo* – another film that opens with an iconic drive – was the creative team's guiding light.

"It's interesting to see how things looked in 1981 compared to my memory," Smith said.

Smith remembered an LA that was "dark and cold" – a breeding ground for wealth fetishization, abundant drugs, drive-by shootings and serial murder, all of which are starkly reflected in *The Shards*. But, she added, "I didn't realize how much fun it was too." Without phones or social media, she said, the visuals of the physical world were especially vivid. "You were basically scrolling through the universe."

Staging the city

LA is undeniably its own character in *The Shards*.

"We're lucky to have our source material be written by one of the most detail-oriented writers of that particular age," said Rigney, who portrays the fictionalized Ellis. "Listening to the book while driving the streets that were mentioned in the book allowed me to immediately connect with the world. Living in LA was really the key."

To that end, the show's characters flit from one iconic LA destination to another, including Trumps, a bygone West Hollywood restaurant; the Sherman Oaks Galleria; and Westwood Village.

"The craziest thing about Westwood in the '80s was how crowded it was," Smith said. "You never go to a place in LA [now] and there are people everywhere. It was the



HAYES WARNER (left) and Evan Rachel Wood in an episode of 'The Shards.' (FX/TNS)

spot; even me, I was from the Valley and I wanted to go to Westwood on the weekend."

To build the movie palace and surrounding neighborhood traversed by Bret in the opening sequence, the team used the exterior of the Bruin Theater and the interior of the adjacent Fox Theater, now known as the Westwood Village Theater, taking care to "undo" any changes made in the last 45 years.

Across the street, they transformed a Taco Bell into a Hamburger Hamlet and erected awnings for other recognizable former businesses, like the restaurant Mario's.

One of the most memorable locations for Smith to recreate was the Sherman Oaks Galleria, which, she said, was "basically gutted" in the '90s.

"That was where I used to hang out, so I knew exactly what it looked like in my head," she said.

The most important visuals to get right were the giant skylight and the escalators climbing up from the mall's center. Luckily, she found both at the South Bay Galleria in Redondo Beach, which her team covered in red carpeting to stay faithful to the Sherman Oaks mall's *

original design. "When I saw it set up, I was like, 'This is amazing. This is like time travel, but you're traveling back to your childhood,'" she said. "I've done period before, and you always feel like you're time traveling to a certain extent, but it's visceral when it's yours."

Styling the era

The Shards may be set in the '80s, but don't expect any neon leotards.

Instead, the show's costume department leaned into a "late '70s, transitional, mauve-y, gray-bluish" color palette, according to costume designer and co-executive producer Lou Eyrich, a longtime collaborator with Murphy.

"That way, when you pop in the pops of color, they definitely stand out," she said.

As with locations and production design, Ellis's novel provided much of the raw material the costume department needed.

"There's this dossier that's basically an Excel spreadsheet of every single reference to music, movies, fashion [and] cars throughout *The Shards*, so you could always go back to that," said Josh Marsh, a

costume designer on the series.

Music shapes both the series' tone and its fashion. "For us, you were influenced by music videos big time," Eyrich said. "MTV came out in August of '81 and the show starts in July. Until then, besides magazines, you couldn't just go on the Internet and see what was happening over in the UK or even in New York."

While *American Gigolo* was still the most prominent reference, Eyrich and Marsh took a bit of a *Breakfast Club* approach to their character design.

"It was about creating the most elevated version of what their character's archetype might be," Marsh said. "Class president, the jock, the cultural disruptor, the new wave aesthetic."

The character Ellis, for instance, had to project "that iconic preppy Southern California look that also evokes desire out of all of these men and women," said Marsh. His best friend, Susan Reynolds (Kaia Gerber), is an elegant Brooke Shields type, and movie producer Terry Schaffer (Wes Bentley), one of the show's few adult characters,

was influenced by Lindsey Buckingham, all leather jackets and silk shirts unbuttoned to the navel.

Beyond staying true to the characters and the time period, Eyrich and Marsh had to consider a few practical elements: the disparities in vintage sizing, for one, plus the horror of it all.

"With each look we would get excited about, we'd need to think, 'Does it need multiples? Do they get murdered?' Because with vintage clothes, oftentimes it's just the one," Marsh said. "We're either finding the perfect piece and then making more of them, or falling in love with something and shooting it in a very specific way so it doesn't get bloody until the end of the day."

Nailing the lore

Beneath the sunglasses, silk blouses, and luxury cars, *The Shards* is a story of innocence lost. It's a theme that resonates intimately for the show's producers and creative team, many of whom were around Ellis's age in the early '80s.

"I really think that this show plays to Ryan Murphy's particular strengths," said Rigney, who trusted Murphy to guide his performance as a teen in the era. "He's bringing so much of himself and his life and his experience of 1981 to the show that I think it's a very personal show for him."

Brad Simpson, an executive producer on *The Shards* who, along with producing partner Nina Jacobson, has partnered with Murphy on shows including *The People vs. O. J. Simpson* and *Love Story*, said the show united many of his interests and influences.

"I was a teenager when *Less Than Zero* came out, and I was living in Arkansas. That vision of LA, I saw not as a cautionary tale, but something to aspire to," he said.

As is typical for the Ellis canon, wealth and privilege are paramount in *The Shards* universe, and Smith called upon her experience as a middle-class teenager attending an expensive private school to help design that world.

"I understand the sphere of these people and the motivations and I've been to a lot of these amazing houses," she said. "I would say it's helped me in my career because I'm not that afraid of wealthy people. You can't be in Hollywood."

LA in the '80s was the perfect setting for a coming-of-age mystery, Simpson said, not only because the city was in a "golden age of serial killers," but also because the city was on "the verge of a revival."

President Ronald Reagan had just been elected, consumerism was back in vogue, and a new wave of Hollywood films memorialized "a sleek city defined by these noirish neon nights and these bright, intense, colorful days." While the show doesn't confront it directly, Simpson also said the "specter of AIDS" lurks in the background for the teens who "think they're invincible."

He hopes the early '80s nostalgia will resonate not just for those who experienced it firsthand, but for young people now who romanticize a smartphone-free existence. Though he knows both Ellis's and Murphy's work tends to induce "strong reactions," he also hopes people will see beyond the "movie poster exterior."

"It really is about friendship. It's about coming of age. It's about being closeted. It's about not knowing who you are when you're 18 and being afraid to reveal yourself. It's about the terrors of growing up. And it's about the power of memory and nostalgia," he said. "I hope people see that in it." (Los Angeles Times/TNS)